

Modes of Philology in Medieval South India

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Modes of Philology in Medieval South India

By

Whitney Cox



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The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2016035562>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2451-9200

ISBN 978-90-04-33167-9 (paperback)

ISBN 978-90-04-33233-1 (e-book)

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This work is published by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

For Suzanne, Peter, and Alice,
anyathāsambhavāt



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Acknowledgments

The rudiments of this study were first presented as a lecture at the Freie Universität zu Berlin on 10 February 2011 within the Zukunftsphilologie research program. This marked the beginning of what has been an exceptionally productive and enjoyable collaboration with the Zukunftsphilologie program, for which I am enduringly grateful. Zukunftsphilologie has proven to be a remarkable forum for thinking about twenty-first century textual scholarship. It has been a source of pride and satisfaction to be associated with it over the last five years, and I am delighted that this volume is the first monograph in its Philological Encounters series. On the occasion of that first presentation of these ideas, I greatly benefitted from comments by Manan Ahmed, Islam Dayeh, Travis Smith, Luther Obrock, and Sumit Mandal. In the course of its long transformation from brief lecture to monograph, this study has been improved through the aid and advice of a great many colleagues and friends: I would especially like to thank Muzaffar Alam, Daud Ali, Jean-Luc Chevillard, Lorraine Daston, Dominic Goodall, Kengo Harimoto, Rajeev Kinra, Rochona Majumdar, Anne Monius, Francesca Orsini, Srilata Raman, and Gary Tubb. Individual segments of the argument have been presented at Cambridge University, Harvard University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's South Asian Studies Conference: my thanks to my hosts, and to all who attended and commented upon these presentations. Drafts of the introductory and concluding chapters benefitted from discussion with my colleagues in the department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. I am especially indebted to Sheldon Pollock, Sascha Ebeling, and Thibaut d'Hubert for their painstakingly close reading of the book in various states of drafty *deshabille*, and for their searching comments, critiques, and suggestions. I can only hope that I have repaid something of their care in this final version; its remaining faults are mine alone. The final version of the text greatly benefitted from the exceptionally careful attention of Margherita Trento; Katherine Ulrich prepared the index. For supporting the Open Access publication of this book, I am grateful for the support of the Committee on Southern Asian Studies and the Humanities Visiting Committee, both of the University of Chicago.

Philology remains as much a congeries of habits as a form of knowledge, something that is learned through observation or imitation. Such anyway has been my experience. To whatever extent I may call myself a philologist, it is due to the good fortune of having had extraordinary models on whom to base myself. Sheldon Pollock has provided for me through his own scholarship and scholarly life an incomparable example. Many of the texts I discuss here I first

read in Chennai with my revered guides R. Vijayalakshmy and K. Srinivasan; what I understand of the practice of textual criticism I owe to Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson. Dan Arnold, Yigal Bronner, Wendy Doniger, Larry McCrea, V. Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Blake Wentworth have all taught me a great deal, and have contributed to this work in ways both obvious and subtle. And it is to those three teachers who are in every way the closest to me that I owe by far the greatest debt. This book is dedicated to them.

A Note on the Transliteration, Presentation and Citation of Primary Texts

In transliterating Sanskrit, I have used the system that is now almost universally adopted in Indological scholarship (that of, e.g., Apte's dictionary); the same system underlies the presentation of Prakrit, with the addition of the signs for the short vowels *ě* and *ō* and the independent short *i* and *u* vowel (e.g. *uvadisai*), to eliminate potential confusion with the Sanskrit complex vowels.

For Tamil, I depart from the system used in the *Madras Tamil Lexicon* in favor of the alternative used in, for instance, John Marr's *The Eight Anthologies* (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1985) or David Shulman's *The Wisdom of Poets* (Delhi: Oxford, 2001). That is, I distinguish the short vowels *ě* and *ō* instead of their long counterparts, and I give metrical Tamil texts with divisions corresponding to their word boundaries, not their prosodic units, marking the hyper-short *u* vowels that are deleted through *sandhi* by a single inverted comma. This scheme of transliteration is consistent with that used for Sanskrit and other Indic languages, and, although the Tamil of premodern times did not generally graphically distinguish the long and short *e/o* pairs, when necessary its users did so through the addition of a diacritical mark (the *pulli*) added to the *short* vowels. The word division here adopted is also congruent with that used for Sanskrit; as there is no standard yet commonly accepted among Tamilists for the marking of significant boundaries in a line of verse—and since the habit of marking *cār* boundaries appears to have only been introduced as a pedagogical aid in Tamil editions of the nineteenth century—it seems better to me to be consistent.

As befits a book on philological scholarship, much of the argument that follows depends on the more or less lengthy unpacking of texts composed in these three languages. In order to avoid trying the patience or the endurance of the non-specialist reader, most of the primary source citations have been reported in the footnotes. I have adopted a somewhat subjective judgement about when to introduce transliterated text into the body of the book and when to consign it to the notes. Generally speaking, when the argument directly addresses itself to features of the language of a primary source—whether these be grammatical, stylistic, phonaesthetic, rhetorical, or otherwise—I have included the original text in the body.

When documenting citations in primary-language sources, I cite the work by title as it appears in the first section of the bibliography; if more than one edition is cited there, it is the first mentioned text that is the edition of reference

for this study. For verse texts, or for texts with commonly recognized section divisions, I cite them as such; thus *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.9 refers to the ninth verse of the first chapter (there called a *pariccheda*) of Thakur and Jha's edition. Individual quarters of such verses are identified by the serial letters *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, as is Indological practice; '*Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.9c' would then refer to that verse's third quarter, while '1.9cd' would refer to its second half. For verse texts without chapter divisions, the verses are cited by number following 'v.' or 'vv.'; '*Pēriyapurāṇam* vv. 47–49' therefore refers to the running verse numbering of Mutaliyār's edition of that work (in which its individual constituent *purāṇams* are also independently numbered; I ignore these). The same holds true for works divided by line number; here the reference is preceded by 'l.' or 'll.' All other primary sources are cited by the page number of the edition of reference, with a shortened title given for works after their first mention; thus '*Mañjarī*, 98' refers to a citation from page 98 of Vrajavallabha Dviveda's edition of the *Mahārthamañjarīparimala*.

Introduction: Towards a History of Indic Philology

Philology was everywhere and nowhere in premodern India, and this is a problem that demands the attention of anyone interested in the global history of this form of knowledge. That it was everywhere can be established by a broad set of criteria: among them, the evidence of manuscript production and reproduction; the millennia-long history of the disciplines of language science and hermeneutics; and a commonly-held set of textual and interpretive practices seen in the works of authors who lived and worked in disparate times, places, languages, and fields. That it was nowhere is equally apparent: the civilization of classical and medieval India—that time-deep cultural and social complex whose principal but not exclusive linguistic medium was Sanskrit—produced no self-conscious account of philology (indeed, it lacked a word for it altogether) and, compared to other Eurasian culture-areas like Western Europe, the Arabic ecumene, or the Sinitic world, never witnessed any sort of crisis of textual knowledge which would issue into a set of general theory of textual authenticity and reliability. On this view, Indic civilization produced literati and scholars in great abundance, but no philologists.

An anecdote perfectly captures this apparent asymmetry. When Georg Bühler, arguably the greatest Indologist of the Victorian period, was in the midst of his tour in search for manuscripts in the valley of Kashmir in 1875, he encountered a “most objectionable habit,” in which manuscripts were “not unfrequently [*sic*] ‘cooked,’ i.e. the lacunæ and defects in the original are filled in according to the fancy of the Pandit who corrects them.” He continued,

I was asked by my friends if the new copies to be made for me were *to be made complete* or not; and one Pandit confessed to me with contrition, after I had convinced him of the badness of the system, that formerly he himself had restored a large portion of the *Vishṇudharmottara*. [In the case of the *Nilamatapurāṇa*,] the Mahârāja of Kaśmîr was the innocent cause of the forgery. He ordered Pandit Sâhebrâm to prepare a trustworthy copy of the *Nilamata* for edition. As the Pandit found that all his MSS. were defective in the beginning, and as he knew from the fragments, as well as from the *Râjataranginî* what the lost portions did contain, he restored the whole work according to his best ability. If I had not come to Kaśmîr soon after his death, it is not improbable that the genuine text would have

disappeared altogether. For the Pandits thought, until I convinced them of the contrary, Sâhebrâm's copy greatly superior to all others.¹

Bühler was as genial and sympathetic a student of classical India as any, and this was by no means simply Orientalist *hauteur*. He admits that a similar lack of integrity had been the norm until quite recently in Europe, dating the emergence of the "historico-critical method" to the "end of the last [i.e. the eighteenth] century." All the same, the anecdote has acquired the status of a fable, a just-so story of Indic traditionalism's lack of philological scruple, even in its best representatives.

A more hermeneutically or ethnographically charitable view of this situation suggests itself, that the kind of creation-through-transmission typified by Bühler's Kashmiri informants was a coherent way to orient oneself towards a textual corpus and thus a kind (or a 'mode') of philology in its own right. Such a view would have comparable cases from Europe and elsewhere to recommend it, and it would also be able to ally itself with the now oft-voiced critique of the positivism underlying just the sort of "historico-critical" methods that Bühler presumed to be so self-evidently superior. In the context of contemporary debates in the humanities on the pluralization and globalization of knowledge, such a presumption could be understood to embed within it a host of concealed assumptions about the relationship between the history of European knowledge and of knowledge produced elsewhere, which by its very asymmetry was complicit in the reproduction of political, social, and institutional power—Bühler, after all, wrote as a functionary of the colonial state.²

The present study of the modes of philology which were practiced in medieval southern India begins from a position similar to this. It is centered on the recovery of habits of reading, thinking, and writing that were earlier analogues

1 Georg Bühler, *Detailed Report of a tour in search of Sanskrit mss. made in Kaśmîr, Rajputana, and Central India* (London: Trubner and Co, 1877), 33, with his emphasis and scheme of transliteration; earlier, Bühler had described the same Sahebrâm's son, Dâmodar, as the "one really distinguished Pandit" he met with during his travels (26).

2 For an example of this line of thinking, attempting to recover the range of epistemic options plowed over by a self-aggrandizing colonial modernity, see Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1995), esp. 8–25 (an overview of the place of philology in the practice of a 'pluritopic hermeneutics') and 125–216 (two extended case studies of the interaction between Nahuatl and Hispano-Latin forms of knowledge). A more recent and abstract restatement can be found in Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo, "On Pluritopic Hermeneutics, Transmodern Thinking, and Decolonial Philosophy," *Encounters* 1, no. 1 (2009).

to those practiced by Sahebrām and his fellow Kashmiri Pandits. Nevertheless, its argument is distinct from this broadly postcolonialist line of thinking in a number of ways. While I presume that knowledge and scholarly practice are imbricated in wider schemes of power, this imbrication is not understood to be a monopoly of the modern or the colonial; nor does it take this one historical moment to be the sole locus of epistemic transformation, contestation, and disruption. On the contrary, another such transformative moment can be located in time and place considered here, the far South of the Indian subcontinent over a roughly two hundred year period stretching across the common era's twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These spatial and temporal restrictions are informed by the limits of my own linguistic competence and study; as these were very eventful centuries, I hasten to emphasize at the outset that this is only a partial picture of the spectrum of textual scholarship there undertaken.

I argue that the south Indian philology of this period was transformed as a direct result of the creation of new corpora of anonymous Sanskrit texts. These embodied practices which—for all their difference from the textual methods of the post-classical West, and for all their similarities to the habits which were castigated by Bühler—present an internally consistent set of interrelated modes of philology. These philological methods were framed, expanded, and refined via the production of a huge number of new texts, classed under the ancient genre titles of *tantra* and *purāṇa*, which entered into circulation in the South from the middle of the eleventh century. These new textual corpora in turn supplied an intellectual catalyst and a body of source material that fed back into the practices of more traditional works of scholarship, to novel and dramatic effect. The larger point that this book aims to document and describe is that the genres, scholarly tools, and methods of argument that were diagnostic of this particular kind of philological practice raise important questions about the enterprise of the history of philology more generally.

Philology?

It will likely not come as a surprise to any readers of this book that philology is enjoying a moment of recuperation. From the several well-known “returns” to it announced over the last few decades, through the efforts—concretized in this publication series—to reflect upon and so ensure its future, to the recent publication of a popular-scholarly history of its life in the Anglophone world, philology is receiving some overdue attention as a central part of the humanities and the history of knowledge more generally. This is not the place

to review the circumstances that have led to this moment, nor to survey all of the positions staked out within it: tracking the bibliography of reflections on philology has become a philological task in its own right.³

But first of all, of what do we even speak when we speak of philology? A great many definitions have been mooted, over a period of centuries, and these have been diverse in their presumptions and sometimes contradictory in their ramifications. I take as a starting point a recent attempt at a definition by Sheldon Pollock, who has suggested that we understand philology *tout court* to be “the discipline of making sense of texts,” which “is and always has been a global knowledge practice, as global as textualized language itself.”⁴ Some might wish to offer a more specific definition, or to claim that philology is something that we need to keep within a tightly maintained set of historical, cultural, or linguistic parameters to have it be of any analytic use. For my part, I find much that is commendable in this attempt to formulate such a broadly comparative, minimalist definition, one that is deliberately framed in light of the situation in we students of the non-European past now find ourselves. This definition, moreover, served as a guideline for a notable effort by Pollock and a group of his collaborators to produce a survey of the global range of past philologies. This pioneering effort of juxtaposition supplies the condition of possibility for a study like the present monograph.

All the same, Pollock’s proposed definition can be sharpened in several ways.

First of all, the texts with which a potential philologist concerns herself are both *prior* and *plural*. This is perhaps an obvious point, even a truism; nevertheless, certain significant entailments follow from it. It is only in light of some preexisting set of texts that philology can, properly speaking, operate. While a philologist may of course bring her attention to bear on a single work produced

3 Pollock’s “Introduction” to *World Philology*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Ku-ming Kevin Chang (Harvard University Press, 2015) contains an especially useful survey; Jerome McGann’s *A New Republic of Letters* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2014) and James Turner’s *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015) both appeared too recently to be included there; it is the latter that I refer to as a recent integrative history of the subject. Another recent and very significant statement, Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most’s “History of Science and History of Philologies,” (*Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 378–390), is discussed in the Conclusions.

4 Sheldon Pollock “Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World,” *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 934. This may be usefully supplemented by the same author’s recent review article (“Indian Philology and India’s Philology,” *Journal Asiatique* 299, no. 1 (2011)) of Gérard Colas and Gerdi Gerschheimer, eds. *Écrire Et Transmettre En Inde Classique* (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2009), and by Pollock’s most recent statement on this theme (“Philology and Freedom,” *Philological Encounters*, Vol. 1 (2016)).

by a contemporary (what used to be called ‘literary criticism’), the epistemological backing of a collection of preexisting texts is a logical as well as practical necessity. Practically, this depends on an act of delimitation, the creation of a corpus or a set of corpora within a wider preexisting field, in order to supply the particular sphere in which the philologist is able to go about her business of making sense. This does not imply that the philologist must by definition be a historian or even a historicist: the presumption of priority does not entail any particular set of causal or metaphysical criteria. The adherents of Mīmāṃsā (‘The Inquiry’), among premodern India’s most precocious philological theorists and practitioners, presumed their target corpus to exist outside of time and causality altogether. But it was the Mīmāṃsakas’ principled decision to delimit their enquiries to the Veda that made possible their exegetical perspicacity; and it was this that in turn motivated other kinds of old Indic philologists (among them, jurists and theorists of poetry) to adopt and adapt the Mīmāṃsakas’ methods.

The second of my suggested alterations to the minimalist model concerns technique. Pollock’s definition, in its effort to make the franchise of potential philologies as expansive as possible—to let a hundred philological flowers bloom—risks overextension, and the confusion of philology with simply reading. Any literate is in some sense committed to the pragmatic project of “making sense” of a given text, whether it be lyric poem or café menu, learned treatise or children’s storybook. Philology is expressly and exclusively a form of *virtuoso* reading, reading as a methodical, self-aware and self-reflexive practice. Further, it is reading performed *in public*, whether in teaching or in the production of a text of one’s own. It is this insistence on the public nature of philology—as both understanding and communicative practice—that serves as a principal check upon collapsing it into just reading as such.

Philologists, virtuoso professional literates working in some sort of inter-subjectively available arena, practice an intensified mode of reading, one that consists of a shifting congeries of specific and stipulable methods and practices. Such a mode of reading, moreover, could vary within a given era or within the norms of a particular genre; indeed, in Indian premodernity it could often vary within the works of a single author.⁵ So as historians of philology, we

5 Cf. Gerard Colas, “Critique et Transmission des Textes de L’Inde Classique,” *Diogenes* 186 (1999): 49 (his emphasis): “L’éventail des critères de choix des leçons comme leur hiérarchie relative dépend des disciplines en question [...] Faudrait-il donc distinguer plusieurs *critiques textuelles* indiennes en fonction des genres littéraires? En fait, l’utilité d’une telle distinction reste relative. Le même commentateur, surtout lorsqu’il domine bien plusieurs disciplines, recourt, d’une page à l’autre, à des arguments très différents: il fait flèche de tout bois.”

cannot specify in advance one type of virtuoso reading—e.g. the kind that seeks to assess textual variation, or that presumes the workings of an authorial intention—to be philological and any other to be non-philological. On the contrary, a multitude of different philological techniques existed and co-existed (not always happily) within specific social and institutional contexts. Like all human activities, these changed over time through the interventions of particular agents, in the service of particular projects. Any global history of philology needs to acknowledge and to account for this technical variability, while retaining the epistemic openness that is the most salutary feature of a minimal definition such as Pollock's. In fact, in retaining such a minimal definition, we open up the possibility of this one form of knowledge providing a base of operations, as it were, to think about the global history of knowledge more generally.

Indian Philology?

But can we write a history of premodern Indic philology? It is notoriously difficult to reliably locate early Indian texts and authors in space and time, and nowhere is this more the case than in Sanskrit, the putatively timeless language of the gods, and the language of most of the materials I will review here. As such, attempting to present Sanskrit philology diachronically—and thus attempting to chart patterns of change over time—might seem like an exercise in tentative conjecture, if not in pure imagination.⁶ But this problem of evidence is less troubling than a more fundamental lexical and conceptual difficulty, and this must be confronted at the outset. There simply is not a term or a concept for 'philology' in Sanskrit or Tamil or in any other historical South Asian language, with the important exception of Persian.⁷ What we may delineate as the category of 'philological practice' was scattered over a broad range

6 Colas ("Critique et Transmission", 54) concludes his commendable overview of premodern Indic textual criticism by acknowledging the lack of firm chronology to be "le plus grand obstacle" to a more detailed history.

7 See Kinra "This Noble Science: Indo-Persian Comparative Philology, c. 1000–1800 CE" in *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements With Sheldon Pollock*, ed. Yigal Bronner et al. (Ann Arbor: Association of Asian Studies, 2011), who renders the Arabic loan *'ilm-i lughat* as "science of philology" (371); Kinra, however, focuses upon Persophone philological scholarship (in fact, lexicography) from a considerably later period, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE. A fuller version of Kinra's argument has recently appeared: "Cultures of Comparative Philology in the Early Modern Indo-Persian World," *Philological Encounters*, 1 (2016).

of scholarly genres, intellectual disciplines, and life-ways, lacking any sort of conceptual or institutional center that might provide the minimal conditions for a history. To begin, as it were, before the beginning, it is useful to scout out some of the lexical contexts in which we might conceive of an Indic (or a Sanskritic) philology, despite the evident absence of a single equivalent. By beginning this way, I am not so much interested in arguing for a counterfactual history (“what would they have called it had they given it a name?”); nor do I wish to chart a cultural or civilizational lack (as in the interminable debates over historicity in classical India). Instead, I seek simply to lay out some of the implicit conditions of the thought-world of medieval India’s textual scholarship.

In Sanskrit, there are at least two possibilities for an equivalent for ‘philology’ as I have tentatively defined it, as the public and methodical practice of virtuoso reading. The first of these is *vyākhyāna*, ‘exposition’ or ‘explication’. This term appears as an already-established principle in Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya* (‘Great Commentary,’ perhaps 2nd century BCE) on the foundational grammatical *sūtras* of Pāṇini. Insisting that the grammar included subtle indications (*jñāpakas*) of the details of its teaching, Patañjali invokes the first of his system’s explanatory metarules or *paribhāṣās*: *vyākhyānato viśeṣapratipattir na hi sandehād alakṣaṇam*, “The understanding of a particular detail derives from explication, for a rule does not fail due to uncertainty about it.” Here, *vyākhyāna*—a word which by its morphology signals its affinity to the discipline of grammar, *vyākaraṇa*, itself—has a predominantly pedagogical sense, and thus neatly captures what I have suggested is philology’s public or communicative dimension. It is only through the *explication du texte* that the student can gain insight into the inner workings of the grammatical system. Given the primacy accorded to grammar throughout the long history of Sanskrit literary culture and its vernacular congeners, this early attestation of the need for interpretative unpacking might be understood as a warrant for textual scholarship more broadly. But this early injunction, however influential, never provoked any second-order reflection (a *vyākhyāna śāstra*, so to say) on how this might be performed.⁸

8 A partial exception to this can be seen in the set of *tantrayuktis* or ‘interpretative strategies’ that are referred to in a cluster of diverse early treatises in Sanskrit, notably the *Arthaśāstra* on politics and the medical authors Caraka and Suśruta, as well as exerting a notable influence on grammatical writing in Tamil: see V.K. Lele, *The Doctrine of the tantrayukti-s: Methodology of Theoretico-Scientific Treatises in Sanskrit* (Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashan, 1981) and Jean-Luc Chevillard, “The Metagrammatical Vocabulary inside the Lists of 32 *Tantrayukti-s* and its Adaptation to Tamil: Towards a Sanskrit-Tamil Dictionary,” in

In fact, the very precociousness of certain kinds of textuality in Sanskrit may have short-circuited such reflection. It is the stuff of general cultural history that the archaic ritual and hymnic cycle of the Veda is called *śruti* or 'the hearing', in reference to its wholly oral-aural transmission and the supposed self-evidence of its content, as directly available and reliable as the data of one's senses. It was to these which the earliest forms of knowledge were directly attached as the 'limbs of the Veda' or *vedāṅgas*: phonetics, prosody, grammar, etymology, liturgics, and astral science. These in turn were grouped within a further, diverse body of works—initially also oral-aural, and subsequently reduced to writing—that augmented, expanded upon and complemented the *śruti* corpus. These were the *smṛti* or 'memory,' which also included such central cultural monuments as the *Mahābhārata* epic and the law code attributed to Manu. Such a diverse and prodigiously early textual ecology—in which specialist *vyākhyāna* seems to extend all the way down, like so many tortoises—might have foreclosed the possibility of imagining a comprehensive practice of virtuoso reading and interpretation. More to the point, the oral-aural prejudices built into this system, and the astonishing feats of mnemotechnic which sustained these prejudices, seems to have forestalled systematic thinking about works of language whose historical life was grounded in text-artifacts, despite the certain cultivation of writing and formal literacy for millennia in India.⁹

The other candidate in Sanskrit for a conceptual counterpart to 'philology' falls within the scope of *vyutpatti*. This is a complex lexeme which in its most basic sense means something like 'development' or 'cultivation'. It describes the linguistic practice of etymology or verbal derivation on the one hand (as in the *Mahāvyutpatti*, the "Great Work on Etymology," an early ninth-century Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary¹⁰), and on the other, a process of language learning and scholarly self-fashioning (where its sense is perhaps closest to 'education' or '*Bildung*'). *Vyutpatti* is something that was performed, whether onto a lexical item or onto the consciousness of a student: this draws attention to the methodical dimension of philological practice that I have emphasized, as well as sharpening the sense of philology as an ethical art or a way of life. Encompassing both the technical-practical and intellectual and moral dimensions

Between Preservation and Recreation: Proceedings of a workshop in honour of T.V. Gopal Iyer, ed. Eva Wilden (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009).

9 My thinking here is indebted to discussion with Gary Tubb.

10 See Pieter Verhagen, *A history of Sanskrit grammatical literature in Tibet, Vol. 1: Transmission of the canonical literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 15 ff.

of scholarship, *vyutpatti* captures something important; however, sustained reflection on the term is vanishingly rare.

The only domain of which I am aware where the word became a significant term of art is in the early history of *alaṃkāraśāstra* or poetic theory. As with the priority of *vyākhyāna* in grammar, *vyutpatti* was present at the creation of the discipline of poetics. In the preamble to the earliest surviving work of self-conscious literary theory, Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaṃkāra* (*On the Ornamentation of Poetry*, before 700 CE¹¹), the author includes his initial self-questioning about the need for a formal treatise on his chosen subject. Bhāmaha introduces the view of unnamed others, for whom the beautification of utterances consists solely in the proper cultivation of nominal and verbal forms (*supāṃ tinām ca vyutpattim vācām vāñchanty alaṃkṛtiṃ*); this in turn is equated with 'fine language' (*sauśabdyam*) as such (1.14–15). He goes on to pair this strictly linguistic understanding with an equal attention to the nature of meaning: *vyutpatti* thus remains for him strictly within the canons of grammatical usage. Writing polemically in Bhāmaha's wake, the slightly later poet and theorist Daṇḍin staked out a different interpretation, grounded in *vyutpatti*'s semantic ambiguity: "Learned men, with an eye to people's cultivation, have composed the procedure for the crafting of language, which possesses a variety of styles."¹² Ratnaśrījñāna (ca. 950), Daṇḍin's earliest and most perspicacious commentator, adopting Daṇḍin's own word in his previous verse, understands *vyutpattiḥ* as *guṇadoṣavivekaḥ*, the ability to distinguish good from bad, and takes pains to emphasize that the act of literary interpretation contributes to the wider cultivation of moral awareness. Showing his own Buddhist confessional proclivities, Ratna writes,

One can profit greatly due to just the description of, say, a king who understands virtue, and from the meaning of this [description], one can attain both the morally good and happiness. What this amounts to saying is that there is no human goal that does not arise due to literature, provided that its basis has been properly understood.¹³

11 See Yigal Bronner, "A Question of Priority: Revisiting the Bhāmaha-Daṇḍin Debate," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2012) on Bhāmaha's *floruit* and his relationship to the other earliest surviving theorist, Daṇḍin.

12 *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.9: *ataḥ prajānām vyutpattim abhisandhāya sūrayaḥ | vācām vicitramārgā-ṇām nibabandhuḥ krīvāvidhim ||*

13 *Ad loc*: *guṇajñarājādī[varṇanāto py arthātī]śayaprāptis tadarthāc ca dharmāḥ sukhaṃ ca sampatsyete. kim bahunā so 'sti puruṣārthaḥ kaścit yaḥ kāvyāt pariḡhītāśrayān na jayate.* (the bracketted text is the editors Thakur and Jha's conjectural restoration). For

In the work of the maverick literary theorist Rājaśekhara (ca. 900), *vyutpatti* made its closest approach to becoming a master-concept. The fifth chapter of his *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (called *kāvyapākaśāstra*, “The Process of Perfecting Poetry”) explores the distinction between *vyutpatti* and *pratibhā* (poetic ‘genius’ or ‘imagination’) and seeks to assess the relative value of each in the formation of a poet.¹⁴ As is typical in Rājaśekhara, the chapter’s method is forensic, and several definitions of *vyutpatti* are mooted: received scholarly opinion defines *vyutpatti* as ‘extensive learning,’ necessary for a poet to discuss a wide range of themes. To this, Rājaśekhara himself, extending Daṇḍin, retorts that it is ‘the discrimination of the proper from the improper.’ Here learning is joined to judgment, in a way that is suggestive of a broader intellectual and ethical program, a promising start for a more general theory.¹⁵ Later in the same chapter, invoking a now-lost authority named Maṅgala, Rājaśekhara ends up returning *vyutpatti* to its status as just ‘fineness of language’ or *śauśabdyam*, simply returning to the point from which Bhāmaha had commenced centuries earlier. Thus, while his discussion of *vyutpatti* (and his invocation of prior opinion of it) is intriguing, Rājaśekhara’s understanding of the term was at best inchoate; for him, as for every other poetic theorist, *vyutpatti* wavered between its technical-etymological and educative senses. Perhaps owing to this very semantic instability, *vyutpatti* never gained currency as a general covering term for the professional cultivation of language, whether among the *ālaṃkārikas* or elsewhere.

Neither of these two lexemes, nor their equivalents in the Indian vernaculars, can thus be claimed as a conceptual pair-part to philology. This lack of a single conceptual center is indicative of a still greater proliferation were we to attempt a social history of philological practice. The agents responsible for philology as it was actually performed in premodern India range over the anonymous emending scribe (that Great Satan of modern textual criticism), the village schoolmaster, and the itinerant *pāṭhaka* or reciter, through to the canonical commentators, literary critics and authors of independent treatises. The ongoing work of these and other agents would have been sustained

Ratnaśrījñāna’s date see Sheldon Pollock, “Ratnaśrījñāna,” in *Encyclopedia of Indian Wisdom: Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri Felicitation Volume*, ed. R.K. Sharma (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 2005).

- 14 For a compelling interpretation of *pratibhā*, the other side of Rājaśekhara’s distinction, see David Shulman, *More than Real: A History of the Imagination in South India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), esp. 80–89.
- 15 *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, 26: *bahujñatā vyutpattir ity ācāryāḥ. sarvatodikkā hi kavivācaḥ [...] ucitā-nucitaviveko vyutpattir iti yāyāvarīyaḥ.*

everywhere by the silent majority of Indian textual culture, the individual readers and possessors of text-artifacts, the more or less learned and enthusiastic bibliophiles who produced and consumed the enormous majority of writing. These men (and some women), though not themselves philologists in the sense adopted here, were legatees of philologists' professional skills, the connoisseurs of their successful elucidations of textual meaning, and the reproducers of their corruptions and blunders. Our sense of all of these agents tends only towards the anecdotal: there exists nothing like a sociology or phenomenology of reading in this world. This is not to say this is impossible, simply that it has never been attempted.¹⁶

To be certain, this absence of a term-counterpart for 'philology' is troubling. So too is the difficulty of plotting, however tentatively, a social or institutional location for the performance of self-conscious textual scholarship, of the sort supplied by the medieval European monastery and university, or by the examination systems of the Sinitic world. I am tempted nevertheless to ascribe the lack of a ready-to-hand lexical and conceptual equivalent to philology to something like a famous *aperçu* of Margaret Mead's, that if a fish were an anthropologist, the last thing it would discover would be water. Mead may have meant this self-deprecatingly (or dismissively): in this case, however, the men who swam through the currents of early India's philological practices seem not to have needed to abstract themselves away from their labors with the text in such a way. Philological discipline appears to have been so integral to the life-world of those elite literates to whom we owe India's textual archive that to name it as such may have simply been superfluous.¹⁷

Existing Studies

This absence of an emic self-understanding has colored attempts by Indologists to understand and explain premodern Indian philology. In keeping with the larger rehabilitation of philology across the academy, the last decade has

16 A partial exception to this can be found in Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114–129, which thoughtfully and provocatively argues for the dominance of the oral-aural over the text-artifactual dimension of classical and medieval Indic pedagogy and scholarship. Concentrating on the possibly non-representative world of the Buddhist monastery, Griffiths claims that a text-object was likely to have served as a stage prop for traditional instruction, rather than being actively consulted.

17 Cf. Pollock, "Introduction", 16, who cautiously frames a similar hypothesis.

seen an increasing attention to the topic. Focusing on just a few recent contributions, on those materials focusing on Sanskrit, and oversimplifying considerably, two major trends can be distinguished. The first of these has attempted to characterize the editorial practices and the methods of text-constitution of early Indian scholiasts, in order to recover a prehistory of philological technique; the second, more hermeneutical trend has sought to historicize individual acts of textual understanding, and to situate these within particular reading communities.

Plotting the direction of the first of these trends, a pioneering study by R.S. Bhattacharya surveyed a diversity of commentarial and scribal habits seen across a spectrum of śāstric, epic, literary, and technical works.¹⁸ Bhattacharya did not live to complete a full study of the phenomenon, but his well-annotated essay documented the awareness of textual corruption and its causes, the relative value assigned to different manuscript sources, and other fundamental technical criteria for a lectional criticism, present throughout Sanskrit textual culture. Drawing on Bhattacharya, among others, Colas' brief but comprehensive article tacks between the evidence of manuscript copyists and the more or less formalized procedures of commentators in constituting their root-texts. His conclusions are sobering: the inconsistencies and contradictions of doctrine—between the desire to preserve and the need to harmonize, thus between faithful transmission and conjecture—were so strong, and the diversity of actual practices of criticism so great, that a coherent positive account of early Indian philology is extremely difficult to synthesize.¹⁹

More optimistic is Olivelle's account of the textual criticism practiced by the medieval southern scholiast Haradatta, writing on the aphorisms on *dharma* attributed to Āpastamba. Olivelle extensively demonstrates that not only was Haradatta an empirically thorough student of the available tradition of Āpastamba, likely collating both manuscript and oral transmissions of the work, but that the commentator's methods were in fact more scrupulous, and his proposed emendations more sensible, than those of his most strident 19th century Indological critic, whose willful perchance for hasty textual repair Olivelle contrasts with Haradatta's own methods.²⁰ Meanwhile, the editorial recovery of

18 Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, "Use of Manuscripts in Textual Criticism by our Commentators," in *Sampādana ke Siddhānta aur Upādāna (Principles of Editing and Instrumentation)*, ed. V.V. Dwivedi et al. (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990).

19 Colas, "Critique et Transmission", see further the quotations given above, nn. 5 and 6.

20 Patrick Olivelle, "Sanskrit Commentators and the Transmission of Texts: Haradatta on Āpastamba Dharmaśūtra," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27 (1999); see also idem, "Unfaithful Transmitters: Philological Criticism and Critical Editions of the Upaniṣads," *Journal of*

the earliest version of Vallabhadeva's commentary on Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* has revealed a terse gloss far less discursive than the other scholia attributed to the early tenth-century Kashmirian.²¹ While eschewing questions beyond their own philological work, the editors Goodall and Isaacson show that this sort of scholarly apparatus was subject to extensive revision and expansion by later hands, while also supplying evidence of the ways in which emendation of the poet's text were driven by the priorities of a later theoretical consensus.²²

Sheldon Pollock's recent synthesizing discussion of literary and Vedic commentary needs to be seen alongside these contributions, especially insofar as Pollock's is the first attempt to offer a historical periodization of India's philology. Departing from the close synchronism between the emergence of commentarial writing on Sanskrit belles-lettres in the works of the selfsame Vallabhadeva and on the *Mahābhārata* epic at the hands of renunciate-scholar Devabodha (possibly dating to the early eleventh century and, like Vallabha, a Kashmirian), Pollock proposes the gradual efflorescence of surviving commentarial writing to be not an artifact of textual survival but "an actual intellectual-historical transformation," one that would reach its zenith in fourteenth cen-

Indian Philosophy 26 (1998) for a fuller account of Otto Böhtlingk's interventionism. Olive's reasoning here is by no means an appeal to a fetishization of tradition: on occasion (e.g. "Sanskrit Commentators," 567 and n. 44), he is more than happy to accept the great St. Petersburg scholar's judgement, provided that it withstands scrutiny.

- 21 Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson, eds. *The Raghupañcīkā of Vallabhadeva, Being the Earliest Commentary on the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa* Vol. 1 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2003).
- 22 These changes to Kālidāsa's text, the majority of which relate to grammatical adjustments to the source and target of similes in response to the latterday strictures of *alamkāraśāstra*, are discussed in Dominic Goodall, "*Bhūte 'āha' iti pramādāt: Firm evidence for the Direction of Change Where Certain Verses of the Raghuvamśa are Variousy Transmitted,*" *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft* 151, no. 1 (2001) and more recently in idem, "Retracer la transmission des textes littéraires à l'aide des textes 'théoriques' de l'*Alamkāraśāstra* ancien," in Colas and Gerschheimer, *Écrire Et Transmettre*. The massive incursions, which the editors find in the transmission of Vallabhadeva (first diagnosed by Goodall in his announcement of the edition), produced a far more 'user-friendly' version of the commentary than the text initially published by the Kashmirian. This echoes West's dictum on the scholia of the classical world: "Commentaries, lexica, and other works of a grammatical nature were rightly regarded as collections of material to be pruned, adapted or added to, rather than as sacrosanct literary entities" (Martin Litchfield West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique applicable to Greek and Latin Texts* (London: B.G. Truebner, 1973), 16). As Goodall convincingly demonstrates, however, this process of incursion ended up crucially degrading the integral text of Vallabha, and often obscuring the reading which he had before him.

tury South India in the realization of the vast project of exegesis of the Vedic corpus attributed to Sāyaṇa.²³ Drawing on earlier work, Pollock details the process of recension, emendation, and athetization that animated this scholarly practice; but where Colas, with similar materials, saw an unreconcilable confusion of methods, Pollock's view of such eclecticism is more optimistic: this embodied "a model of textuality at once historicist-intentionalist and purist-aestheticist—standards that, if obviously contradictory, are perhaps not fatally so."²⁴

Similar in intent is Pollock's attention to the understanding of larger-order phenomena of textual meaning evinced, if only occasionally, by premodern commentators. This links his work with the second major trend of the Indological reconstruction of past philological habits, the attempt to recover practices of exegesis and interpretation, rather than text-critical establishment. A landmark for this second trajectory is the collective work of Tubb and Boose.²⁵ Though this purports to be primer for students, in fact it contains the most detailed grammar, as it were, of the philological practices of Sanskritic India ever published. This is the pinnacle of the decades-long recuperation of the intellectual and cultural-historical value of the interpretations contained within traditional scholarship; to this may be joined the extensive citations and discussions of interpretations embedded in the apparatus of the ongoing *Rāmāyaṇa* translation project of Robert Goldman and his collaborators.²⁶ Efforts at recovering commentarial interpretations, especially but not exclusively those of literary commentary, have become a small subfield, especially in North America.²⁷ Though in many cases this scholarship has not explicitly

23 Sheldon Pollock, "What was Philology in Early Modern India?" in *World Philology*, 133 (cf. 116).

24 Pollock, "What was Philology," 122.

25 Gary Tubb and Emery Boose, *Scholastic Sanskrit: A Manual For Students* (New York: American Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2007).

26 See most recently, and most extensively, Robert Goldman et al., trans, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: An Epic of Ancient India. Volume 6: Yuddhakāṇḍa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 2009); see also Goldman, "How fast do monkeys fly? How long do demons sleep?" *Rivista di Studi Sudasiatici* 1 (2006).

27 To instance only a few representative and recent works: Ajay Rao, *Refiguring the Rāmāyaṇa as theology: a history of reception in premodern India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015) extends Goldman et al's interest in the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic to its South Indian theological interpreters; Lawrence McCrea has provided what is perhaps the most compelling account of the constitutive intertextuality of the literary commentary ("Poetry in Chains: Commentary and Control in the Sanskrit Poetic Tradition," in *Language, Ritual, and Poetics in Ancient India and Iran*, ed. David Shulman (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences

understood its object to be philology, in the sense argued for here, that is precisely what it is. To take only a single and admittedly extraordinary example, what was the industrial-level production of exegesis on Śrīharṣa's twelfth century masterpiece, the *Naiṣadhīya*, if not philology? Thanks to the work of Deven Patel, we can see for the first time how this text, easily and deliberately the most recondite in the whole of the canon of the *mahākāvya* ('major poem'), elicited a range of interpretative responses from the straightforward and explanatory to the bravura, and produced as argumentative a field of partisans as any philological speciality ever.²⁸

All of this work has been of an extremely high scholarly caliber, from which I have learned a great deal; this bodes well for further studies in the philological practices that South Asia's textual archive can yield up in such possible abundance. A common thread uniting nearly all of this scholarship has been its nearly exclusive attention to the commentary as the locus of philology.²⁹ Of course, this makes a great deal of sense. If philology is in fact both "the making sense of texts" and the public practice of a methodical virtuoso reading, then the work of commentators would seem to be the most logical place to look for it. Commentators, after all, read closely and widely, and left a paper trail as to the nature of this reading; and in South Asia, this paper trail is an enormous one. Moreover, in looking for an editorial logic (or illogic) in their ways of assembling their textual objects, Indologists do their premodern predecessors the honor of regarding them as their peers, to be assessed on their merits in a way that is at least analogous to how one might review the work of a contemporary. Given the

and Humanities 2010)) while Yigal Bronner and McCrea, in an essay on the alternate versions of a passage in a key canonical *mahākāvya*, have produced the most detailed close reading yet to appear that take into account both issues of text constitution and hermeneutics ("To Be or Not to Be Śiśupāla: Which Version of the Key Speech in Māgha's Great Poem Did He Really Write?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 132, no. 2 (2012)). Outside of the domain of literary exegesis, see Richard Nance's innovative study on the commentarial habits of late first millennium Mahāyāna Buddhism (*Speaking for Buddhas: Scriptural Commentary in Indian Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press 2012)).

28 See Deven Patel, *Text to Tradition: The Naiṣadhīyacarita and Literary Community in South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), especially 81–130; in his concluding remarks to this discussion (129–130), Patel foregrounds the commentators' philology.

29 To be sure, there are exceptions: Colas ("Critique et Transmission", 51) discusses the critical testimony of Veṅkaṭanātha's *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, one of the texts discussed in the present work, while Pollock ("What was Philology", 123–124 and "Future Philology", 941–943) gives an appreciative *précis* of the argument of a seventeenth century philological 'monograph' by Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatīri, the *Apāṇinīyapramāṇyasādhana* ("A Demonstration of the Validity of Non-standard Sanskrit").

fact that the explicit standard-bearers of philology as a discipline tend today to be textual editors, this focus makes even more sense.

Yet there is something to this focus that is reminiscent of the joke about the man who lost his keys in the park on the way home from a night's drinking, and was found looking for them under the streetlamp since "that's where the light is". Surely we can discover things about early Indian philology from what we can recover of the habits and ideas of copyists and scholiasts, and surely these things are of interest. But should we be prepared to broaden the scope of our search for the practices of textual sense-making—if we look outside the circle of the streetlamp—there is much that awaits our discovery. This book is meant to serve as an initial attempt. It looks, first of all, at texts that have not previously been considered as philological at all, certainly not in the same way that Vallabhadeva or Haradatta would be so considered. The suggestion that we reframe the *purāṇas* and *tantras* created in South India in the first several centuries of the second millennium as works of philology is not meant to be willfully contrarian; still less is it meant to subserve an indigenist or nativist effort to delegitmate the critical and historical philology that is the basis of Indological practice. By recovering the philological impulses that these works contained we are made aware, in the first instance, of the ways in which certain past people set about making sense of their own local textual universe. The three independent studies that comprise the bulk of the book enable us to trace in great detail the diversity of further varieties of philology which were enabled by this—logically and chronologically precedent, but ongoing and contemporaneous—production of tantric and purāṇic works.

This is an account, then, of intellectual and cultural historical change, of how new ways of thought and writing were produced in one very delimited context. In order to enter into this particular space and time, some broad introductory parameters are necessary. These are needed in order to sketch in some of the broad historical, material-practical, and ideological circumstances presumed in the chapters that follow. It is to these that I now turn.

Parameters

Consider, for a moment, the sheer quantum of manuscript text-artifacts in South Asian languages that have survived to the present: easily seven million manuscripts, and possibly as many as thirty million,³⁰ numbers which defini-

30 I draw these figures from Dominik Wujastyk, "Indian Manuscripts" in Jörg Quenzer, et al

tively put to rest any notion of the epiphenomenal status of the writing in this world. Faced with this, we could simply presume the existence of textual scholarship, even absent any sort of emic theory of it. But the history of the written word and the concern with it as a matter of specialist preoccupation can be pushed back further in time than just the remnants that have survived to the present: in particular, the history of textuality can be broadly correlated with what we know of the history and periodization of Indic society more generally.

Over the last several decades, the period around the turn of the first millennium of the Common Era has sloughed off most of the opprobrium with which it had been laden by colonial and post-colonial scholarship alike. These centuries had been seen by high Orientalist historiography as the final, decadent period of 'Hindu' impotence faced with the coming of Islam; this view was in turn supplanted—though with its implicit value judgments retained intact—by a subsequent historical materialist scholarship which saw in them the setting for the feudal cashiering of India's society and economy. The spectres of these lapsed consensuses continue to haunt the study of what has come to be called the 'early medieval' period of South Asian history, but the contributions made by recent historical scholarship have been profound. The subcontinent as a whole is no longer seen as a site of a one-way process of social and economic devolution but as a complex network of heterogeneous but interrelated political and circulatory spaces.³¹

Although it has never been seen in this way, a prime index of southern Asia's burgeoning economic and social development in this period can be gauged through its textuality. The early second millennium witnessed the growth in absolute terms of the sheer amount of textual production, the velocity of its

eds., *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015); the high end of the spectrum is the number adduced by the late David Pingree.

- 31 An excellent recent review of this historiographical situation can be found in Daud Ali, "The historiography of the medieval in South Asia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22, no. 1 (2012). On high orientalist scholarship, refer to Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 117–122 (medieval 'Hinduism' as the causative agent of decline) and 185–188 (the Dark Ages view of medieval polity). The feudal mode of production thesis continues to command serious adherents in the modern Indian academy, and has produced an enormous scholarship: a classic statement is D.D. Kosambi, *An introduction to the study of Indian history* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1956), while B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997) represents an intelligent and sophisticated critique of this position from within its own intellectual horizons. Andre Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1990) provides a useful political-historical framework expressly aimed at supplanting the dichotomies of earlier scholarship.

circulation, and its social and spatial pervasion. While our awareness of this can be in part attributed to the adventitious fact of preservation, the many data we possess suggest a wider pattern of change. Much valuable evidence can be gathered thanks to the efforts of researchers and cataloguers working the world over; especially significant is the remarkable work of the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP), jointly based in Hamburg and Kathmandu. Some tentative conclusions can be ventured by adopting as a sample those palm-leaf manuscripts catalogued by the NGMCP which have been securely assigned dates in the common era (to date, approximately 1100 individual texts): after a handful of ninth and tenth century manuscripts, there is a jump in the eleventh century (forty-three texts) and then a considerable expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (around a hundred and ten texts each; the three centuries thus account for roughly twenty-four percent of the sample). These data are admittedly wholly anecdotal, both owing to the isolation of the Nepal valley in southern Asia and to the vagaries of both manuscript survival and the NGMCP's ongoing work of cataloguing. But they jibe with what can be seen elsewhere, for instance with Bühler's reference to "the numerous ancient palm-leaf MSS. from Gujarāt, Rājputāna, and the northern Dekhan, the date of which run certainly from the 11th, and possibly from the 10th century" (thus trending somewhat earlier), or with L.B. Gandhi's survey of the Jain collections at Patan, in which "of the dated manuscripts there are about a dozen written in the 12th century and one hundred in the 13th century" (thus somewhat later).³²

The collections in particular regions need to be situated in networks extending the length and breadth of the subcontinent, within which the individual text-artifact moved rapidly and far. An example of this can be seen, once again in the Kathmandu collections, in the form of a copy of the as-yet unpublished *Siddhāntasārapaddhati* of King Bhoja of Dhārā, in what's now the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, roughly fourteen hundred kilometers to the southwest. This manuscript was written in the local Newari script and dated to the year 197 of the Nepalese era (or 1078 CE), less than a generation after the end of the king's reign around 1055: this copy was thus possibly the transcript of an exemplar produced in its royal author's lifetime.³³ The movement of individ-

32 G. Bühler, *Indian Paleography*. Translated by John Faithfull Fleet. Appendix to *The Indian Antiquary* 33 (1904) 85; L.B. Gandhi, ed. *A catalogue of manuscripts in the Jain bhandars at Jesalmere, compiled by C.D. Dalāl* (Baroda: Central Library, 1923), 40.

33 I derive my information for this manuscript (NAK 1–1363) from the NGMCP's exemplary online archive (http://134.100.72.204/wiki/B_28-29_Siddhāntasārapaddhati, accessed 15 April 2012).

ual literati, often across vast distances, suggests that a case like this was far from anomalous. Another complementary index of the secular growth of textual production can be found in the expansion of epigraphical corpora, most prodigiously in the case of the Tamil country under the Coḷa kings, in whose regnal years nearly twenty thousand inscriptional texts are dated, themselves only the surviving remnants of a far more widespread documentary order of deeds, land assessments, wills, and legal judgments.³⁴ These data, grounded in material culture, in turn suggest inferences about the social history of philology in this period: seen in the light of the history of early medieval South Asia, we can suppose that an expanding and intensifying frontier of agriculture and a growing population made possible a proliferating specialist class of literates, including virtuoso literates like professional philologists.

The changes of this period, however, were not just quantitative; the practice of textual study seems to also to have transformed. Evidence of this is furnished by the emergence or reconfiguration of new textual genres. Perhaps most significantly, as already mentioned, this period witnessed the creation of the literary commentary; both the poetic anthology and the legal digest seem to also have their origins then.³⁵ But bulking largest, both physically and in terms of its wider significance, is the emergence of a habit of encyclopedism. This begins in

34 A recent authoritative survey argues that, out of a corpus of roughly 28,000 Tamil inscriptions issued over the period 300 BCE–1900 CE, around 19,000 can be assigned to the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, the period of Coḷa ascendancy, imperial dominance, and decline (Y. Subbarayalu, *South India Under the Cholas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 18).

35 On the literary commentary, see again Pollock, “What was Philology”, 116–118. The earliest surviving anthology is Vidyākara’s *Subhāṣitaratnaśoḥa* (ca. 1100 CE): its significance was noted by its editors Kosambi and Gokhale in their introduction (xxix–xxxix, noting the existence of earlier collectanea) and by its translator in his (Daniel H.H. Ingalls, trans. *An anthology of Sanskrit court poetry: Vidyākara’s “Subhāṣitaratnaśoḥa.”* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965), 30 ff.); the appreciation of this has only increased in the years since (Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (Berkeley, California UP, 2006), 114–116). The remarkable labors of Ludwik Sternbach established the importance of the anthologies for the literary history of Sanskrit more generally: see especially his *A descriptive catalogue of poets quoted in Sanskrit anthologies and inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1978–1980). On the legal digest, see Robert Lingat, *The classical law of India* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973), 115–122, who dates the beginnings of the genre to the work of Lakṣmīdhara (first half of the twelfth c.). This periodization—which remarkably coincides with Vidyākara’s lifetime—was taken up in a speculative way some years ago by Pollock, who suggested that the geographical provenance of the *nibandha* works could be mapped onto the advancing frontiers of Turkic expansion in the subcontinent, a hypothesis that still awaits serious exploration (Sheldon Pollock, “Deep

the eleventh century, and was a major transformation in the study of major literary genres and scholarly disciplines, which were by this time many centuries old.³⁶ This constituted a census, consolidation, extension, and application of textual knowledge across fields, often leading to enormous bibliographic and discursive treatises, like Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* (Kashmir, ca. 1020), Bhojadeva's many works, including the aforementioned *Siddhāntasārapaddhati* on Śaiva ritual or his *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* on literary theory (Malwa, ca. 1010–1050),³⁷ Someśvara's *Mānasollāsa* on everything from cooking to poetry to battlefield horoscopy (northwest Deccan, completed 1128), and Ballālasena's *Dānasāgara* on gift giving in all its permutations (Bengal, ca. 1170). In their published form, these works and those like them can run to many volumes—as manuscripts they take up many multiples of codices. These were not the more or less accidental agglomerations of material, but rather deliberately structured works, cross-referenced and indexed, invoking (whether directly or indirectly) what amounts to a library of source-texts. These are thus fundamentally philological, many of them—as three of the four named above—ascribed to royal authors, and so suggestive of well-functioning court ateliers of librarians, copyists, and

Orientalism?" in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, ed. Carol Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 105–106).

36 I reluctantly leave unexplored here the question of the pan-Eurasian history of this move to the encyclopedia form: for contemporaneous Arabic and Persian encyclopedism, see the essays in Gerhard Endress, ed. *Organizing knowledge: encyclopaedic activities in the pre-eighteenth century Islamic world* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) and now Elias Muhanna, "Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*." (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2012); several of the essays collected in Florence Bretelle-Establet and Karine Chemla, eds., *Qu'était-ce qu'écrire une encyclopédie en Chine*, special issue of *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 1 (2007) speak to the Sinitic world in this period. The conjunctural peculiarities of the political and cultural history of Latin western Europe, above all the widespread institutional collapse and cultural involution of the end of the Roman imperium, provoked a prodigiously early habit of encyclopedism relative to other Eurasian culture-areas: Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, the paradigmatic case, was completed in the early seventh century. Significantly, however, the early second millennium saw the first movement towards encyclopedic knowledge in the European vernaculars: Brunetto Latini's *Livre du Trésor* was completed in the final decades of the thirteenth century. Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) is an excellent overview—cross-cultural in ambit, though focusing on western Europe—of the long history of information overload and the means to remedy it.

37 See Whitney Cox, "Bhoja's Alternate Universe," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22, no. 1 (2012) for a discussion of the organizational principles at work in the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*.

research scholars. The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw boom years for professional textual scholars; this was a boom, moreover, extending well beyond the precincts of royal capitals.

Equally significant, and bringing us into the time and space of which I want to speak in detail, is what we can gather of patterns of transmission and textual circulation across the length of the Subcontinent. Again, from about the mid-eleventh century, the transmission of and creative reaction to Sanskrit literature produced in the cultural hothouse of Kashmir in the far northwest can be seen in ever greater detail in the peninsula and in the far south.³⁸ In just acknowledging the fact of the Kashmir-to-South India axis of transmission in this period, we bring into view remarkable feats of specialized labor and technical know-how. The selection and physical transportation of Sanskrit works along the extreme north-south axis of the subcontinent, the need for the transcription of texts written on birchbark and in the Kashmir-specific Śāradā character to the several Southern scripts usually written on palm leaf—these would have necessitated a well-working network of circulation and distribution, along with the expert knowledge that made this all possible, and an audience of readers for whom all of this work was worthwhile. Significantly, this seems to have happened in a completely decentralized way; no southern king set the collection of Kashmirian texts in motion, no court or monastic scriptoria seem to have played a significant role in their dissemination.

These two trends—the new encyclopedism and the southern appropriation of Kashmirian Sanskrit—were on a practical plane highly philologically demanding, and were only possible because of the existence and cultivation of a professional skill-set: abilities in palaeography, critical bibliography, source-criticism, and in the use and refinement of a sophisticated array of interpretative tools. These form a part of a conventional and recognisable bundle of philological practices, and we can easily assimilate these processes of collection, commentary, circulation, and recasting with the work of scholars in other times and places. These in turn supply the backdrop to other philological texts and practices that cannot perhaps be so easily assimilated to our tacit understanding of philology, and bring us to the matter of the current study.

The more exotic modes of philology traced in the pages that follow first found place in the creation of new corpora of anonymous works written in Sanskrit, the work of philologists who chose to conceal themselves behind the personae of divinities and other mythological characters. These texts, couched

38 For a sketch of these transmissional dynamics, see Whitney Cox, “Saffron in the *rasam*,” in *South Asian Texts in History*, 177–201.

as examples of the much older genre-types of *purāṇas* and *tantras*, included *inter alia* efforts to organize and rationalize antecedent texts; in doing so, they resembled the products of the encyclopedists who were their approximate contemporaries. Along with this organizing bibliographic impulse, these anonymous philologists also incorporated, recast, and at times outright plagiarized earlier works.

Relating themselves in complex ways to the proliferating disciplinary orders centering on the Hindu deities Viṣṇu and Śiva, these scholars' and their texts' sectarian location is itself significant within the wider cultural and social world of the time. It was precisely this era that witnessed the enormous growth of the South Indian temple as a major feature of the physical and institutional landscape, a centrality that was to survive the collapse of the imperial state system of the Coḷa kings that had subtended its emergence. Already in the first rush of the creation of these new texts, dateable to the early decades of the 1100s, this anonymous mode of tantric and purāṇic philology provoked a response in authors writing in more conventional genres. An especially significant case of this, reviewed briefly in the next chapter, sees these techniques repurposed in a major work of Tamil religious epic.

This early appropriation was to prove prescient. As these new texts and their philologies became a part of the accepted textual ecology, they were to create problems as well as possibilities for more conventional elite scholarship. In the case surveyed in Chapter Three, the *Bhāvaprakāśana* or "On the Displaying of Literary Emotions" of Śāradātanaya, we encounter what appears to be a wholesale importation of the methods of these modes of philology into the fields of literary and dramatic theory. What at first glance appears to be the product of a scholarly naïveté, especially in light of the profound transformations undergone within these *śāstras* elsewhere, in fact illustrates a complex process of intellectual and compositional triangulation, suggestive of the plural milieux of argument and textual creation in this time and place. Elsewhere, the presence of these philological methods occasioned even more complex reactions. Certain scholars possessed of a high-cultural literary and philosophical education were confronted by the evident need to justify the validity of these recent pseudepigrapha, while also adopting and adapting their methods. Two exemplary instances of this conjoint process of defense and appropriation provide the major case studies of the fourth and fifth chapters. Roughly contemporary, these present an initial study in contrast. A single technical monograph among the wide-ranging, multilingual oeuvre of the celebrated Vaiṣṇava poet-philosopher Veṅkaṭanātha (known also by his sobriquet Vedāntadeśika), the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* seems to present a conservative effort to police the canon of Vaiṣṇava liturgical writing. In distinct contrast to the small library assigned to

Veṅkaṭanātha, the *Mahārthamañjarī* is the sole surviving work of the antinomian Śākta-Śaiva Maheśvarānanda. A hybrid and deeply idiosyncratic text, the *Mañjarī*'s most marked point of departure from the Vaiṣṇava master's essay on canonicity rests in its claim to itself constitute at once a work of divine revelation and the product of a particular human author.

The contrasts between the two texts do not vanish under close inspection, yet commonalities do emerge. Above all, there is their indebtedness to the work of their anonymous philological forebears; both respond to and adapt the pseudepigraphical works' new ways of handling texts, in some ways that are explicit and some that are tacit, or possibly unconscious. In this, we can see *in vivo* the ways in which exceptionally intelligent and widely-read men came to terms with the new scriptural and scholarly dispensation of post-Coḷa era. Further, this appropriation was filtered through these two authors' specifically literary education and interests, just as in the case of the dramaturge Śāradātanaya. Veṅkaṭanātha was one of the most justly celebrated Sanskrit and Tamil poets of his time; Maheśvarānanda's work reveals a powerful investment—he called it *āgraha*, 'an obsession'—with poetry and poetic theory. This point of connection, overriding or perhaps undergirding the marked theological differences of these men and their systems, suggests avenues for historical study beyond religious or sectarian identity. Based on these substantive studies, I conclude by returning to the general questions with which it began, about the place of the Indic past in an emerging global history of philology. By tracing out two lines of general inquiry—philology's imbrication in politics and its status as a form of historically conditioned rational knowledge—the delimited empirical results of this research can suggest avenues whereby the textual scholarship of other times and place, including our own, may be better historicized and better understood.

There is one other mode of philology that needs to be introduced at the outset of this study: that of the philologist who is its author. I claim no special authority in this regard; my own practices as a reader are conventional, and very much a product of the scholarly culture in which I received my training. At the risk of seeming pretentious, it seems to me worthwhile that I unpack these conventions, such as I understand myself to adhere to them.

First of all, my reading is historicist, in that I presume that human creations, preeminently works of textual language, make the most sense in the terms they were conceived and received. Meaningfulness is something I understand to be contextually constituted and contextually constrained: men make their own texts, but they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing. At the same time, diachronic accounts of change—of the innovations, alterations,

and misprisions that befall works of human effort and imagination—are of central interest to me. Many modern philologists are concerned with discerning general patterns and so crafting lawlike generalities. As much as I admire and depend upon work like this, I do not work the same way. Instead, my level of attention tends toward the particularist, at the level of the isolable detail as an occasion for interpretation. The sort of reading I practice tends to focus on the individual word, phrase, trope or reference, with reconstructing its antecedents and plotting its entailments. Finally, I try to be transparent in my presumptions, my evidence, and my explanations. While this amounts to little more than obedience to the grade-school injunction to ‘show your work’, it is a necessary if not a sufficient criterion of the sort of philology I attempt here.

These three guidelines of my philological reading—history, detail, and transparency—have an unreconciled quality to them, of which I am aware. Of necessity, these restrict the scope of inquiry. In its boundedness within a delimited spatio-temporal range, this study is at odds with most of the previous work on early Indic textual scholarship discussed earlier. Where Bhattacharya or Colas or Pollock are prepared to range over centuries and across the subcontinent in their researches, I remain confined to one corner of South India, by and large to the work of three authors who may have been contemporaries. This was not done out of false modesty, still less from the Romantic caprice of trying to see the world in a grain of sand. If anything, this is grounded in the possibly misplaced ambition that this study, if it proves interesting enough, might provide the impetus for other philological historical ethnographies. More problematic is the way that the first of these guidelines—the discipline of historical context—pulls against the priorities of the formal and aesthetic unpacking of the detail. This tension results in an oscillation between two different levels or scales in the argument, between the particular occasion of evidence (the word, phrase, or sentence of which I attempt to make some sense) and the larger order of causality or significance, whether it be intellectual- or social-historical. I do not know if I have succeeded in tacking between these two very different scales; I did, however, try to do so in a way that is self-aware and, again, transparent.

Reflecting on my own mode or manner of philology leads me to a salutary awareness of the difference between this and the sort of methodical, public, virtuoso reading that was once practiced by the authors whom I study. There is a sobering side to this: a great, apparently insuperable distance separates my philology from those studied here. An especially useful way to figure this is in terms of brute materiality, in the form of the palm leaf texts that were the principle medium of the textual culture of the medieval south. To have been any sort of literate in medieval south India, much less a virtuoso professional reader, would have been to spend some substantial portion of one’s life in

their presence: to have experienced them as objects of desire, frustration, excitement, attachment, and occasional enlightenment. I've had moments of this myself, though only at a great distance. There is no surviving direct trace whatsoever of the material basis of the world of our authors: while the habits of writing in the precolonial South were to tenaciously endure into modern times, the texts produced in this time have all fallen victim to time, damp, and the white ant. The works studied here continued to be copied, as did at least some of their sources and the works of their contemporaries.

The precipice on which the survival of any given written work in this time rested is something of which these authors were very much aware: Śāradā-tanaya's habit of inventing citations and the perspicacity with which Veṅkaṭanātha would diagnose potential problems of textual interpolation both depend in their different ways on the endemic material instability of the texts. While other parts of southern Asia preserve manuscripts from many centuries earlier, the far south is a remarkably hostile environment for them; uncopied, a text could easily disappear without a trace in just a few generations' time. It is a tribute to the vigor of the region's textual culture—its silent majority of unknown copyists and readers—that anything survives at all; that works survive in such profusion is a remarkable human accomplishment. Still, it is with a sense of envy that I turn to such a model work on the Greek and Latin classical tradition as Reynolds and Wilson's *Scribes & Scholars*, to read of this work copied at Monte Cassino in the 1000s, or of that autograph text of Petrarch (in many ways, Veṅkaṭanātha's European doppelgänger). This material absence further stands in for the growing gulf which separates us from the world of traditional Indic learning more generally: there were doubtless never very many who went in for the kind of reading, thinking, and writing these works demonstrate, but there are fewer still with each passing day who can access it at all, much less understand it. This gulf that separates us from our late-medieval philologists is something we must keep before our eyes, as we attempt, however cautiously, to cast some light across it.

Textual Pasts and Futures

The Southern Pseudepigrapha: An Overview

This chapter, necessarily programmatic, seeks to accomplish several aims at once. It presents, in the first place, an argument for a hitherto unstudied transformation in the literary history of medieval South India, which saw the creation, promulgation, and reception of a set of interrelated corpora of anonymous texts composed in Sanskrit. The individual texts in these corpora were variously identified as *tantras* and *purāṇas*, earlier genre descriptors to which we will turn in a moment. What was distinctive of these new Southern *tantras* and *purāṇas* is that they evinced a specific concern with relating themselves to a range of antecedent texts and in incorporating and synthesizing earlier texts as source-material. In this, I claim, they embodied a new set of philological methods and concerns of their anonymous authors. These works in turn supplied the conditions of possibility for the works treated in the remainder of this book. The intellectual transformation which these earlier, pseudonymously authored texts embody produced a new mode of philology in its own right, and in turn catalyzed further conceptual and practical changes for the making of texts.

Much of my evidence for the dating and location as well as the significance of these texts I owe to recent scholarship. In what follows, I review some of these contributions; in addition, I provide two brief examinations of exemplary texts of each genre taxon, *purāṇa* and *tantra*. On the basis of these, I suggest that there was a set of shared techniques—what I call a philological ‘toolkit’—whose application is distinctive of the larger body of these Sanskrit texts. This set of techniques has not been previously recognized as ‘philological’, and indeed they do represent a mode of philology that is highly eccentric from the perspective of modern scholarship. Yet both their pervasion throughout these corpora (and well beyond) as well as the creativity of their application suggest that these techniques need to be taken seriously, and understood on their own terms. That this set of philological techniques provoked or otherwise interacted with the wider habits of text-making can be seen in the parallel innovations in a major piece of Tamil religious literature. This latter work, the *Pēṛiyapurāṇam* of the mid-twelfth century poet Cekkīlār, shared a genre taxon with certain examples of the new anonymous philology but possessed a very different literary genealogy and embodied a different set of aesthetic and

practical priorities. That it nevertheless possessed recognizable connections with the mode of philology suggests just how systemic the transformation in fact proved to be.

To begin, an assertion. The far South—by which I mean essentially the Tamil country—from roughly the late eleventh century witnessed the creation of several new large corpora of pseudonymous literature, written within genre confines that were themselves already centuries old. Chief among these were the theological, liturgical, and speculative works that attached themselves to the disciplinary orders venerating the deities Viṣṇu and Śiva, texts variously described as *tantras*, *āgamas*, *saṃhitās*, *jñānas* or *bhedas*; for convenience's sake, I will refer to these as either *tantras* or scriptures or scriptural works. All of these texts participate in the convention that they record the conversations of various mythic and supernatural figures, ranging from sages or demigods up to the great cosmic overlords and their families, conversations which are usually set down in simple versified Sanskrit. Similar in their narrative self-presentation, a further class of newly created or redacted verse texts identified themselves with the hoary genre of *purāṇa*, 'lore' or 'work about the past.' Though overlapping to some degree with the contents of the *tantras*, these were at once more diverse in their matter and more discursive in their style.

I should emphasize that these two genres were extremely productive: large numbers of works styling themselves both *tantras* and *purāṇas* had been produced and read for centuries in every corner of the world in which Sanskrit was the privileged medium of elite literacy. *Purāṇa* as a genre likely dates back to the very beginning of the Common Era; the earliest surviving Śaiva *tantra*, the recently published *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, was perhaps completed at some point prior to its eighth century.¹ I take it to be axiomatic that all such texts claiming themselves to be transcriptions of supernatural conversations are in fact the compositions of human authors, and I presume that any reader would share in this conviction. So too did some literati in Indian premodernity, at least in a qualified way. This can be seen in the work of the influential philosopher Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (Kashmir, ca. 890 CE). In the course of his argument for the conditional validity of all varieties of religious revelation, insofar as they, like the Veda, are the work of God, Jayanta introduces an imagined objection: "But if

1 For the *purāṇas*, refer to Ludo Rocher, *The Purāṇas. The History of Indian Literature* vol. 2, fasc. 3. (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986); for the *Niśvāsa*, see Alexis Sanderson "The Lākulas: new evidence of a system intermediate between Pāñcārthika Pāśupatism and Āgamic Śaivism," *The Indian Philosophical Annual* 24 (2006), 152 ff. and now Dominic Goodall et al., eds. and trans., *The Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā: The Earliest Surviving Śaiva Tantra*. v. 1 (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry et al. 2015).

we grant that the validity of all scriptures can be argued for in this way, then if I myself compose a scripture right now, it might come to be seen as valid in just a couple of days.” As is often the case, the words of the imagined opponent are very much to the point: Jayanta has a particular example in mind, that of the Nīlāmbaras (“Black-cloaks”), a self-styled orgiastic religious order put down in his lifetime by king Śaṅkaravarman (r. 883–902).² Jayanta’s criteria for identifying such confected scriptures—even if they are found in apparently old manuscripts—are telling: only works that had gained wide acceptance among learned people, which were not evidently in the self-interest of their propagators, and which conform to social propriety were actually divine utterances;³ other texts could be safely consigned to inauthenticity. In imposing a set of extrinsic criteria, above all his deference to the situational ethics of social utility and a learned appeal to the *sensus communis*, Jayanta’s argument is typical of the received opinion of other classical and medieval thinkers.

These kinds of pseudonymous verse texts had been composed for many centuries prior to the eleventh, and had circulated far beyond South India; indeed, these were among the most wide-ranging works of the Sanskrit cosmopolis.⁴ And much of Sanskrit literature is pseudonymous in exactly this way: the epics, Manu’s law code, and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Sanskrit’s founding treatise on dramaturgy and literary theory, are only a few of the works framed as conversations between various supernatural or otherwise fictitious speakers. This being the case, as well as the huge quantum of texts similar in their genre, whose authors assiduously sought to obliterate all trace of their actual origins in time and space,⁵ the claim to be able to locate specific works—still more the enormous creation of such works—in the far South from the late eleventh century stands in need of justification.

2 *Nyāyamañjarī*, 648: *sarvāgamapramāṇatve nanv evaṃ upapadīte | ahaṃ apy adya yat kiñcid āgamaṃ racayāmi cet || tasyāpi hi pramāṇatvaṃ dinañ katipayair bhavet* |. On the Nīlāmbaras, see especially Csaba Deszö, “‘Much Ado about Religion’: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Āgamaḍambara” (PhD, Balliol College, Oxford, 2006), viii–ix and the references cited there.

3 *Nyāyamañjarī*, 648: *yeṣāṃ na mūlaṃ lobhādi yebhyo nodvijate janaḥ | teṣāṃ eva pramāṇatvaṃ āgamānām iheṣyate ||*

4 For example, see the abundant documentation given in Alexis Sanderson “The Śaiva Religion among the Khmer, Part 1” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient*, 91 (2004) on the transmission of Śaiva literature and practice to Cambodia.

5 Cf. Sheldon Pollock, “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109 no. 4 (1989), 610: “When the dominant hermeneutic of the Vedas eliminated the possibility of historical referentiality, any text seeking recognition of its truth claims ... was required to exclude precisely this referential sphere.”

Here I am especially indebted to the ongoing work a number of Indological colleagues, especially that of Alexis Sanderson and Dominic Goodall. These scholars have done and continue to do revolutionary work in the textual history of Śaiva and increasingly Vaiṣṇava scriptural literature; their own philological project—while not ignoring the kind of developments of interest here—has been concerned with clarifying the contents of the early corpus of these traditions, removing by a convincing set of criteria later works or later excrescences to earlier works, and establishing relationships of dependence and filiation between texts into a well-wrought relative and increasingly absolute chronology. In Sanderson's magisterial accounts of the history of the Śaiva religion, the earliest testimony for the existence of Śaiva scriptures dates from the fifth century of the common era, with the canon proliferating over the following centuries into a complex set of interrelated textual corpora providing detailed instructions for the worship of Śiva, his fierce aspect Bhairava, and any of several goddesses conceived as the deity's indwelling power (*śakti*).⁶ This corpus of religious texts was to provide the standard for élite ritual and speculation far beyond the confines of worshippers of the Śaiva pantheon, as it would provide the model and much of the linguistic raw material for similar scriptural canons created by worshippers of Viṣṇu, as well by Buddhists, whose Vajrayāna (i.e. 'tantric' Buddhist) tradition is largely a repurposing and extension of the Śaiva prototype.⁷

This latter argument will not concern us here, but the parallel Vaiṣṇava incorporation and adaptation of Śaiva texts was largely an affair of the South: it was there that the tradition of Vaiṣṇava worship calling itself the Pañcarātra was the recipient of its tantric liturgical corpus. The Pañcarātra is an ancient tradition of the worship of Viṣṇu, the earliest traces of which can be seen in

6 See Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period," in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. Shingo Einoo (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009), 45–53; this is the most recent and authoritative synthesis of his closely argued scholarly oeuvre. For earlier surveys of the evidence, see Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions*, ed. Stewart Sutherland (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988) (more accessible) and "History through Textual Criticism in the study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras," in *Les Sources et le temps*, ed. François Grimal (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2001) (more specialist).

7 See the initial demonstrations of this thesis in Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in *Buddhism into the Year 2000* (Bangkok and Los Angeles: Dhammakāya Foundation, 1995) and "History through Textual Criticism," 41–47; this is elaborately defended (and much new evidence introduced) in "The Śaiva Age," 124–243. For a measured Buddhological response in what has become an increasingly tribalized debate, see Christian Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 154–168.

the epic *Mahābhārata* (especially the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* contained in its enormous *Śāntiparvan*), and which possessed a centuries-long connection with the brahmanical school of Vedānta, dating from at least to the time of the great non-dualist thinker Śaṅkarācārya (fl. ca. 700 CE).⁸ The production of a new body of Pāñcarātra injunctive and speculative scriptures was a process that had evidently begun in Kashmir, only to have these newly composed works transmit, along with so much else, into the peninsula.⁹ In the far South, this process of new scriptural creation continued: these works served as a vector for the wholesale integration of the liturgical, theological, and speculative systems that were the work of Kashmirian scholars—most of them Śaiva—that are dateable to the close of the 1000s at the earliest.¹⁰ This pattern of demonstrable borrowing thus supplies one of the most reliable data for an external chronology of this process. Above all else, however, these new Southern compositions were concerned with regulating public worship in temples consecrated to Viṣṇu, in a marked shift from the religion of individual salvation evident in the earlier Pāñcarātra scriptures.

In this turn to prescribing the temple worship of their chosen deities, the authors of these southern Vaiṣṇava pseudepigrapha were working in parallel with their Śaiva counterparts, and it is on this literature that recent scholarship has made conspicuous advances. An older scholarly consensus saw the Śaivasiddhānta—the liturgical and doctrinal middle ground of the religion—as essentially a local Tamil subculture. This has now been replaced by an understanding of the school as a pan-Indic phenomenon, which underwent an epochal process of domestication in the far South.¹¹ The transmission of the vast body of Śaiva scriptural, exegetical and philosophical material from Kashmir to the Tamil country seems to have occurred at the same time as it did for the Pāñcarātra, as did the quite rapid creation of a corpus of new *tantras* incorporating and synthesizing the doctrinal developments of the Kashmiri-

8 For the *Nārāyaṇīya*, see the essays collected in Peter Schreiner, ed., *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997); the often-debated date for the lifetime of Śaṅkara follows that given in Allen Thrasher, “The Dates of Maṇḍana Miśra and Śaṅkara,” *Weinert Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 23 (1979).

9 See Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age”, 61–70.

10 This last feature, which can be seen in the Pāñcarātriśa *Lakṣmītantra* and *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā*’s adaptation of the work of the Śaiva Kṣemarāja has been demonstrated by Sanderson (“History Through Textual Criticism”, 35–38).

11 See the frequently acerbic review of older (and to some extent contemporary) scholarship in Dominic Goodall, *The Parākhyantra: A Scripture of the Śaivasiddhānta* (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2004), xiii–xxxiv.

ans. These new compositions supplied liturgies that were to be incorporated into the already flourishing temple culture of the far south, especially that of the Coḷa heartland in the Kaveri river delta.

Here, Goodall's work is decisive. In an effort to distinguish the earlier, pan-Indian Śaiva works, particularly of the Śaivasiddhānta, from later Southern compositions, he has articulated a set of criteria (early manuscripts in Kashmir and Nepal; citations and commentaries by scholars up to and including the twelfth century southerner Aghoraśiva) by which the early tantric sources may be distinguished.¹² In light of these criteria, much of what now passes as the scriptural canon of the southern Siddhānta can be shown to be strictly local creations. Goodall has also adduced convincing evidence for the chronological limit to the creation of much of this canon: noting the wide range of later scriptural works quoted by the commentary on Jñānaśiva's mid-twelfth century *Śivapūjāstava*, the author of which declares himself to be the great-great-grandson of Jñānaśiva's pupil Trilocana, Goodall is led to conclude that ca. 1350 CE provides "a rough *terminus ante quem*" for the composition of a great many of these Śaiva works.¹³ Though representing a different tradition to that of the Śaivasiddhānta, the southern temple-*tantra* calling itself the *Brahmayāmala* can be taken to provide a corresponding rough *a quo* limit, as it correlates closely with the epigraphic testimony found in a temple of a local goddess now known as Kolaramma (in modern Kolar, Karnataka), dated to 1072–1073. This three-century window marks the limits of a reasonably precise periodization.¹⁴

Notably, while not all of the works thus judged to be more recent are concerned with temple worship, all of the works that do center on the temple are to

12 See especially Dominic Goodall, *Bhaṭṭarāmakaṇṭhahaviracitā kiraṇavṛttiḥ: Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the Kiraṇatantra* (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 1998), xl ff and *The Parākhyatantra*, xxii–xxv.

13 Dominic Goodall, "Problems of Name and Lineage: Relationships between South Indian authors of the Śaiva Siddhānta," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10, no. 2 (2000): 212.

14 See Sanderson, "Atharvavedins in Tantric Territory," in *The Atharvaveda and its Paippalāda Śākhā: Historical and Philological papers on a Vedic Tradition*, edited by Arlo Griffiths and Annette Schmiedchen (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2007), 277–278nn.; this text is to be distinguished from the work of the same name studied in Hatley's admirable doctoral thesis (Shaman Hatley, "The *Brahmayāmalatantra* and the Early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs" (PhD. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2007); see esp. 4–5). The relationship between this *tantra* and the liturgical, social and political surround of Kolar's temple culture provide an important part of the evidence for a reinterpretation of the early reign of the Coḷa king in whose early regnal years the inscriptions are dated: this is detailed in Whitney Cox, *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India: Moonset on Sunrise Mountain* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016), 106–111.

be found in this later stratum. This suggests a radical change in the sociology of their reception and reproduction. The earlier composers and consumers of the *tantras* seem to have been an élite audience of initiates, practicing a demanding religious discipline of private ritual and yoga, who embedded this regime in an evolving theological framework. By contrast, the new *tantras* regulating temple practice reached out to a wider constituency, inclusive of the priests who actually performed the work in the burgeoning Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temple complexes of the Coḷa period and after.¹⁵ It was these less élite social actors from whose ranks we may presume these works' anonymous authors to have arisen.

Many of the new Śaiva *tantras*, like the *Brahmayāmala* just mentioned, bore the titles of earlier works, adopted from the lists of scriptures found in the works that had transmitted to the south. For Aghoraśiva, the deeply conservative scholiast whose career marks for Goodall the effective end of the 'classical' theology of the Śaivasiddhānta, this new proliferation of scriptural authorities may have been a source of intellectual discomfort, even embarrassment. For while he was aware that a *tantra* called the *Pauṣkara* was often cited by the Kashmirian authorities whose works he studied and emulated, and he had close at hand a text bearing the same title, one which he found useful enough to cite repeatedly in his own doctrinal works, he could never bring himself to refer to the work by its professed title, knowing it to differ from the text known to the Kashmirians.¹⁶ A similar case is that of the *Kāmikāgama*: attested early and often as the foremost text of the Siddhānta canon, and cited repeatedly

15 The pioneering research of Hélène Brunner is an important precursor here. Though modestly eschewing broad conclusions, her study of an organizing liturgical dichotomy in the *siddhāntatantras* ("*Ātmārthapūjā* versus *parārthapūjā* in the Śaiva tradition," in *The Sanskrit Tradition and Tantrism. Panels of the VIth World Sanskrit Conference*, ed. Teun Goudriann, (Leiden: Brill, 1990)) importantly registers the difference between the élite spiritual exercises of *ātmārtha* worship (that which is "for one's own sake") versus that which is *parārtha* (as she argues, "for the general good"). Noticing inconsistencies in the description of both modes' central figure of the *ācārya* (15–17), Brunner was led to conclude that the *tantras* describing *parārtha* practice borrowed their model from those regulating independent worship; all of the *parārtha*-centred works are those that can be assigned to the twelfth century or later by Goodall's criteria. Here, as elsewhere in her scholarly oeuvre, Brunner's meticulously documented work was remarkable in its informing historical imagination. See also Sanderson "The Śaiva Age," 276–279 and the references cited there on the ambiguous status of the Ādiśaiva Brahman sub-caste in the temples of Tamilnadu and their role in the proliferation of temple-tantras.

16 As Goodall plausibly suggests (*Bhaṭṭarāmakāṇṭhaviracitā Kiraṇavṛttiḥ*, xlv, n. 101; cf. *Parā-khyatantra*, lii).

by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*, none of its early quotations appear in the South Indian *Kāmika*, though it has retained the authority of its earlier namesake.¹⁷

A Case Study: The *Sūtasamhitā*

Rather than reproduce the results of Sanderson, Goodall, and their colleagues' researches here, I will provide a single example of the post-eleventh century pseudepigrapha, drawing not from the textual corpora of Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava initiates, but from the more public medium of purāṇic literature. This is a work calling itself the *Sūtasamhitā* ('The Bard's Collection'), which reached its present shape in the great Śaiva temple city of Cidambaram in the mid-1100s. Arguing for a Śaivized version of Advaita Vedānta (the Veda-congruent doctrine of philosophical non-dualism), the *Samhitā*'s doctrinal exposition is enlivened by descriptive and mythical narrative asides, most of which are centered on Śaiva sites around the Kaveri river delta. The extant version of the text, which was commented upon by a fourteenth century scholar-official called Mādhavamantrin, represents an expansion of an earlier cycle of largely doctrinal materials. The details of this compositional process can be reconstructed with relative confidence, and so furnish a close-up view of the ways in which the *Sūtasamhitā*'s author-compilers were participants in the anonymous philology of their time.¹⁸

The text begins conventionally, hearkening back to the frame narrative of the ancient *Mahābhārata* epic: a sacrificial session in the midst of the mythical Naimiṣa forest is interrupted by the arrival of the bard Romaharṣaṇa, and the sages gathered there request the narration of an auspicious collection of stories (*saṃhitām puṇyām*) from their guest. The bard proceeds to limn the contours of the *purāṇa* genre, again conventionally, listing its eighteen major and minor

17 For the authoritative position of the *Kāmika*, see for example *Mṛgendrāgama, caryāpāda*, vs. 35a; for Abhinava's citations in the *Tantrāloka*, see 1.59, 1.66, 4.25, 6.94, 6.190, 8.213, 22.32, 23.4, 32.34, 32.48. The "new" *Kāmika* is first cited in the *Jñānaratnāvalī* of the mid-twelfth century scholar Jñānaśiva (see Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 279, n. 663, citing a lecture by Goodall): as in the case of his contemporary Aghora's references to the southern *Pauṣkara*, these citations are unattributed.

18 Though I differ in interpretation and in the date I assign to the composition of the *Sūtasamhitā*, I rely here on Raghavan's excellent brief survey of the text (V. Raghavan, "The *Sūtasamhitā*," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 22, nos. 3–4 (1947): 120–125).

instances (1.1.7–18).¹⁹ The bard's theme for this session, however, is to be the 100,000 verse *Skānda* (1.1.19). He proceeds to describe that work's division into six *saṃhitās* or collections, to which he prescribes precise lengths, measured in *granthas*, the thirty-two syllable quantum by which copyists were paid. Significantly, the 6000 *grantha*-long *Sūtasamhitā* is placed second in this list, after the bulky *Sanatkumārasamhitā*, said at 55,000 verse-units to account for the majority of the meta-text (1.1.20, 22). The bard goes on to sub-divide the *Sūtasamhitā* into four *khaṇḍas*, assigning to each a length more or less that of its extant version (1.1.28–32).

This opening index is thus relatively faithful to the actual contents of the work. It also seems to be the first such bibliographic survey of materials going under the title of the *Skānda*- or *Skandapurāṇa*. Indology had long consigned this work to a shadowy existence, as the locus of attribution to which local *purāṇas* were spuriously ascribed, especially the texts called *māhātmyas*, in praise of the grandeur of a specific temple, river, or other location.²⁰ This opinion, however, has been upended by recent research into the earliest surviving claimant to the name, the *Skandapurāṇa* that survives in several remarkably old manuscripts, the earliest of which likely dates to 810 CE.²¹ It was only considerably later—the early *Skandapurāṇa*'s editors have proposed the twelfth century, precisely the period under discussion here²²—that texts began to be affiliated with a meta-*purāṇa* called the *Skanda*, texts which in fact refer to themselves as *khaṇḍas*, using exactly the same terminology by which the *Sūtasamhitā* refers to its own constituent elements.

19 See Travis L. Smith, "Textuality on the Brahmanical 'Frontier'. The Genre of the Sanskrit *Purāṇas*," *Philological Encounters* vol. 1, 347–369.

20 In a representative judgement, the *Skandapurāṇa* is "only a name to which extensive works, said to be the *Samhitās* or the *Khaṇḍas* of the original *Purāṇa*, and numerous *Māhātmyas* claim allegiance." The opinion is that of M.A. Mehendale, cited by Rocher (*The Purāṇas*, 228–229); Rocher goes on to mention (237) the Nepalese manuscript that transmits the 'original' *Skanda*. A witty appreciation of the 'Skandapurāṇa problem' can be found in Wendy Doniger, "The Scrapbook of Undeserved Salvation: The *Kedāra khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*," in *Purāṇa Perennis*, ed. Wendy Doniger (New York: SUNY University Press, 1993). In a sense anticipating my argument here, Doniger writes that the purāṇic authors of a portion of the expanded *Skandapurāṇa* resemble *mutatis mutandis* contemporary Indologists in their efforts to bring together and reconcile a range of earlier texts and themes.

21 For the 'original' or 'Ur-' *Skandapurāṇa*, see Rob Adriaensen, Hans Bakker, and Harunaga Isaacson, "Towards a critical edition of the *Skandapurāṇa*," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 37, no. 4 (1994): 325–331.

22 Adriaensen et al., "Towards a critical edition," 326.

The opening of the *Sūtasamhitā* thus has a ripped-from-the-headlines feel to it: it can be understood not just as an effort to pass off a newly confected text under a prestigious banner—though it was certainly that, too—but as an effort to make sense of its wider textual horizon, while supplying an open structure by which further texts could also be so orientated. In this, the *Sūtasamhitā* appears to have been especially successful: the composers of a mythological narrative cycle with literary ambitions working in Kerala a few generations later, at some point between 1200 and 1313, saw fit to frame their work as a portion of a *Jaiminīyasamhitā* to be found in a “*Brahmāṇḍa-mahāpurāṇa* virtuel,” in a manner that strongly suggests an acquaintance with the *Sūtasamhitā*.²³

The *Sūtasamhitā* authors were remarkable in their attention to prior texts. Many of these are drawn from the Veda, especially the *upaniṣads*, and much of the work is given over to a simplified exposition on their nondualist interpretation: *Advaita Vedānta for Dummies*. At times, however, borrowed language is employed to a more singular effect, as in the text’s opening narrative of Śiva’s self-revelation, when, in an impressive feat of narrative pretzel logic,²⁴

... the divine Rudra [= Śiva] entered into his own complete form. Then the gods—Viṣṇu and all the rest—did not see Rudra. So it was that, with arms upraised, they praised him with the *Atharvaśiras*, with many other Vedic hymns, and with the revered five-syllable *mantra*.

Here, as the gods are said to praise Śiva with the *Atharvaśiras*, a late Śaiva *upaniṣad*, the *Sūtasamhitā* authors draw upon that same work for their raw material; as Mādhavamantrin notes, the wording here closely adapts that work’s own statement, in pseudo-Vedic prose: “then the gods did not see Rudra; the gods meditate upon Rudra and then, with arms upraised, they praise him.”²⁵

23 As suggested by Christophe Vielle, “La date de la *Jaiminīyasamhitā* du *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*: Une confirmation épigraphique du début du xiv^e siècle AD,” *Indologica Taurinensia* 34 (2008): 317 ff. (the text’s precise *terminus ad quem* is supplied by a datable epigraphic record, see 322–323); and, more generally, idem, “Transmission et création purāṇique: Le cas du *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*,” in Colas and Gerschheimer, *Écrire Et Transmettre*, 173–187.

24 *Sūtasamhitā* 1.2.11–12: ... *bhagavān rudraḥ svaṃ pūrṇaṃ rūpam āviśat | nāpaśyanta tato rudraṃ devā viṣṇupurogamāḥ || atharvaśirasā devam astuvamś cordhvaḥbāhavaḥ | anyair nānāvidhaiḥ sūktaiḥ śrīmatpañcākṣareṇa ca |*

25 *Atharvaśiras* 1.6 (with shared material in bold): *tato devā rudraṃ nāpaśyaṃs te devā rudraṃ dhyāyanti tato devā ūrdhvaḥbāhavaḥ stuvanti*.

The texts that are similarly reworked and incorporated into the *Sūtasamhitā* run the gamut of *smārta* orthodoxy, from the Veda to the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.²⁶

This is all in the service of a recognizably Śaiva project, but one that differed in its mechanics and in its presumed social consistency from the initiatory Śaivism of the *tantras*. Even this domain, however, fell within the *Samhitā*'s incorporative ambit. This can be seen with particular clarity in the *purāṇa*'s third major division, the *muktikhaṇḍa* ('section on release'). This concerns the Śaiva theory of liberation, and the gradation of the forms of postmortem beatitude into *sālokya* (existence in Śiva's heaven), *sāmūpya* (proximity to the divine presence), *sārūpya* (possession of Śiva's fundamental characteristics of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipervasion), and *sāyujya* (fusion).²⁷ For the composer-redactors of the *Sūtasamhitā* this four-term series is introduced as that which has been taught in the *upaniṣads* (III.2.28ab: *śrūyate ... vedānteṣu*; a statement that Mādhavamantrin unconvincingly attempts to justify) only to be unfavorably compared to the complete, nonrelational liberation (III.2.35a: *paramā muktiḥ*) that is the *Sūtasamhitā*'s own apex-point. The Śaiva hierarchy is then reintroduced as the subordinate (III.2.36d: *paratantrāḥ*) forms of liberation. Here the text betrays a certain ambivalence towards its Śaiva source material, which are both affirmed and held at arm's length. This system of liberation in stages (*kramamuktiḥ*) is extrapolated out of its strictly Śaiva context, as each of the four grades is respectively correlated with the transectarian trinity of Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā (III.2.40–47ab). It is essential to see the resulting eclectic synthesis not as a collision of unreconciled sources, but as a deliberate textual strategy, a harmonization of diverse materials within the text's own structure.

26 See here Raghavan's extensive (though incomplete) catalogue of these borrowings (Raghavan, "The *Sūtasamhitā*," 120–125).

27 The history of this set of four is obscure: seemingly the earliest list in which these four occur (with *sāmnidhya* in the place of *sāyujya*) can be found in the *Mātaṅgapārameśvarāgama*, *yogapāda* 5.63ff., where they appear as part of a larger set of seven kinds of liberated souls (I thank Dominic Goodall for this reference). Kashmirian exegetes from the eleventh century and after used a three term set (the *Sūtasamhitā*'s set excluding *sārūpya*) and only for the inferior forms of liberation: thus Kṣemarāja *ad Svachchandanatantra* 10.787cd–788ab and Jayaratha *ad Tantrāloka* 13: 245cd–246ab. In later South Indian literature, for example in Vedājñāna's *Śaivāgama-paribhāṣamāñjarī* (ca. 1550), they are established as the set of four we see in the *Sūtasamhitā*; the set of four may be a peculiarly southern development, as it is also found in the Tamil *Tirumantiram* (of uncertain date, but most likely assembled after the emergence of the new Tantric corpus).

The work of incorporation and adaptation seen here may have begun in an earlier recension of the work. The final chapters of the *muktikhaṇḍa* appear to provide a bridge between an earlier version and the extant text. The entire *muktikhaṇḍa* is framed as a dialogue between Śiva and Viṣṇu, with only very occasional interjections by the Sūta, the text's ultimate narrator. This arrangement abruptly changes in the section's eighth and penultimate chapter, where the sages—for the first time in the whole *khaṇḍa*—ask a question of the Sūta: what did Viṣṇu do after he had acquired this knowledge of ultimate things from Śiva? He brought these teachings to the gods, the Sūta explains, having used Cidambaram (III.8.2d: *vyāghrapura*) as a launching pad for his return flight to his heavenly home in Vaikuṇṭha: this marks the text's first entry into real-world geography. When the other gods asked to hear the secrets that has been imparted to him, Viṣṇu demurred, pointing to his own unworthiness as a teacher, and tells them to take themselves to Cidambaram (III.8.8d: *punḍarīka-pura*) and there offer worship to Śiva themselves.

The Sūta again takes up the narration, this time with a noticeable shift in flavor: while most of the *Sūtasamhitā* is written in the brusque economy of the *anuṣṭubh* meter, here it shifts a series of heavily enjambed verses written in the longer verse-forms that are usually the preserve of literary writing. In these, the narrator describes the gods' audience with Śiva (III.8.27–30):

*bhaktiāpūjya maheśvarākhyam amalam muktipradam bhuktidam*²⁸
śaktiā yuktam atiprasannavadanam brahmendrapūrvāḥ surāḥ |
nityānandanirāñjanāmṛtaparajñānānubhūtyā sadā
nṛtyantam parameśvaram paśupatiṁ bhaktiāikalabhyam param || (27)
laukikena vacasā munīśvarā vaidikena vacasā ca tuṣṭuvuḥ |
devadevam akhilārtihārīṇam brahmavajradharapūrvakāḥ surāḥ || (28)
munīśvarā maheśvaraḥ samastadevanāyakaḥ
sureśvarān nirīkṣaṇān nirastapāpapañjarān |
anugraheṇa śaṁkaraḥ pragrhya pārvatīpatiḥ
samastavedaśāstrasārabhūtam uttamottamam || (29)
pradarśayan naṭeśvaraḥ samastadevasannidhau
svanartanam vimuktidam mahattaram maheśvaraḥ |
samastalokarakṣakam mahātmanām hṛdi sthitam
nirīkṣanārham īśvaro 'karot sabhāpatiḥ śivaḥ || (30)

28 *bhuktidam* is my conjecture for ed.'s *bhaktidam*.

The gods, led by Brahmā and Indra, once they had devoutly honored the stainless one called Maheśvara, the giver of liberation and of [karmic] experience, who is joined with his Power and whose face is exceedingly bright, God himself, the lord of creatures, the ultimate, who can only be approached through devotion and who forever dances through the power of his insight, the highest wisdom that is undying, stainless and ever-joyful,

Oh sages, led by Brahmā and the wielder of the *vajra*, the gods praised with the words of the Veda, and with worldly speech the God of gods, who removes all afflictions.

Sages—Maheśvara, the master of all the gods, did in his mercy receive the greatest of the gods, all of whose sins fell away at his gaze, and then Śaṃkara, the husband of the Mountain Goddess and the Lord of Dancers, while he was performing his unique dance in the presence of the gathered gods—the utterly sublime, the essence of all of the Vedas and the *śāstras*, that greatest of dances, which gives total liberation, maintains all of the worlds, and abides in the hearts of the great—the master of the Assembly, Lord Śiva, made his dance manifest to them.

In terms of their narrative content, these verses are completely conventional: the gods praise Śiva and he begins to dance. It is their form that is of particular interest, first of all in the shift to the longer *kāṇya* metres. This is a way of the text drawing attention to itself, breaking with the standard epic verse that dominates it. This formal ‘thickening’ is further borne out by the individual verses, in a surprising way: the first verse, written in the art-metre *śārdūlavikrīḍita*, employs front-rhyme, a figure of sound that is known (as *dvitīyākṣaraprāsa*) yet extremely rare in Sanskrit, but which (under the name *ētukai*) is so common as to be obligatory in medieval Tamil. The final two verses—in the rare *pañcacā-mara* metre—are composed with an obvious priority given to their rhythmic cadence, and contain a spellbinding display of internal rhyme and assonance, again features diagnostic of contemporaneous Tamil poetry, and hardly something one expects to see in a Sanskrit *purāṇa*.

The point bears emphasis: as the composers of the *Sūtasamhitā* shift the scene to Cidambaram, the language of the text itself changes and adopts highly marked ‘Dravidian’ formal features. This establishes a tension in the narrative, as ultimate things are set self-consciously within a resolutely local, historical world: the *Sūtasamhitā*’s Vedāntic truths are by definition timeless and placeless, and the vision of release offered up by the text is the state of com-

plete non-relation, of pure being without becoming. Yet these truths are situated in a particular point in space and are introduced in language that bears the recognizable stamp of the regional and the circumscribed. This tension—between the universal and the particular, between the text's cosmic vision and its own backyard, so to speak—is then resolved by a moment of narratological vertigo. The sages again interrupt the *Sūta*: how can *we* see this dance of Śiva's (3.9.3ab)? Thereupon the whole crew—the narrative bedrock of the entire text—shifts from their sacrifice in the mythical Naimiṣa forest to Cidambaram.

This shift in multiple registers of the text's language, rhetoric, and spatial imagination suggests that these two final chapters of the third *khaṇḍa* were a Cidambaram-specific addendum to an already-existing text. These chapters supply a bridge to the vast bulk of the *Yajñavaibhavakhaṇḍa* which, at 4000 *grantha* verse-units, is about twice as long as the *Samhitā*'s other three sections put together. The *Yajñavaibhava* is itself focused on Cidambaram among the many Śaiva sites it mentions: unlike the three antecedent sections, it is as much concerned with local myth and pilgrimage circuits as it is with Vedāntic *précis*. Even by the forgiving standards of the rest of the text and its genre, its language is repetitive and frequently clumsy; it is also the portion of the text that is most given over to quotation and borrowing, both acknowledged and unacknowledged.²⁹

Textual history thus permits some cautious inferences about the authorial intention that underlay the revision and expansion of the *Sūtasamhitā* into its extant form. Evidently, the expanded text's author-compilers, resident in Cidambaram, took up the earlier narrative and doctrinal cycle and expanded it: both the opening sketch of the *Sūtasamhitā* within the scheme of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the localization of the *muktikhaṇḍa*'s conclusion to the temple-city would be products of this redaction. They then used this expansible purāṇic matrix as a sort of library for an anthology of passages drawn from all over the orthodox textual imagination, considerably building upon the work of their own anonymous predecessors.³⁰

29 These features of the section's language and structure were already noticed by Raghavan, "The *Sūtasamhitā*", 246.

30 Further evidence of this process is detailed in Whitney Cox, "Purāṇic transformations in Cōla Cidambaram," in *Pushpika: Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions. Contributions to Current Research in Indology, Volume 1*, ed. Nina Mirnig, Péter-Dániel Szántó and Michael Williams (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 25–48 where a narrative set in Cidambaram found in the text's first and fourth *khaṇḍas* is compared to a parallel version in another local purāṇic collection, the *Cidambaramāhātmya*.

The received text appears to have emerged in the middle decades of the twelfth century, in the midst of the rapid transformation of Cidambaram into a regionally significant religious center and, spread over its wider cluster of nearby *brahmadeya* villages, the site of a distinctive brahmanical culture. Contemporary epigraphy reveals a micro-region overwhelmingly dominated by brahmins, many of whom were marked out by the anomalous names of their *gotra* or endogamous clan.³¹ These may have been recently brahmanized local elites, or the members of a resolutely local subculture only just beginning to acclimatize to transregional norms of caste comportment. In any case, the *Sūtasamhitā* emerged from this world as an enormous work of synthetic, harmonizing scholarship, and as a charter for what this newly fashioned élite could be: negotiating between Vedāntic orthodoxy and the glamour of initiate Śaivism, the text argues for a new way to be a brahmin and a worshipper of Śiva, and to be embedded in a local world and its particular structures of meaning, while speaking in the universalising register of the pan-Indic *purāṇas*.

Methods of the Anonymous Philology: The ‘Toolkit’

Pseudonymous texts like the *Sūtasamhitā* and the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *tantras* have generally been regarded as the objects or the subject matter of philological study, whether of the premodern style of learned commentary (such as Mādhavamantrin’s gloss on the *Sūtasamhitā*) or the contemporary sort of critical editorial intervention and analysis practiced so admirably by Sanderson and Goodall. These texts can, however, be profitably understood as philological scholarship in their own right, in that they possessed certain recognizable methods of orientating themselves within and with respect to a preexisting corpus of texts. There are two central aspects to what I consider their anonymous authors’ philological toolkit, what may be termed their methods of textual integration and of bibliographic organization.

By the first of these, I refer to the characteristic habit of taking over pieces of prior texts and suturing them into a new argumentative or doctrinal context. These works were critically invested in a project of making sense of a particular textual past, in assembling, comparing, integrating and, in some cases,

31 See Leslie Orr, “Temple Life at Chidambaram in the Chola Period: An Epigraphical Study,” in *Śrī Puṣpāñjali: Dr. C.R. Srinivasan Commemoration Volume*, ed. K.V. Ramesh (Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 2004), 231–233; and Cox, “Purāṇic transformations” and *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry*, pp. 188–189.

hijacking the language of earlier authorities and presenting a new synthesis of it within the authoritative frame of an imagined, mythic authorial voice or voices. This kind of incorporative logic of textual composition can be seen throughout these corpora, especially but by no means exclusively when the materials being incorporated pass across the boundaries of religious traditions. This wholesale borrowing and reworking of existing texts was frequently the result of very serious engagement with the argument and the verbal texture of demanding source materials. Indeed, Sanderson's pathbreaking study of these dynamics ("History through textual criticism"), which sets out the broad picture that he, Goodall, and their colleagues and students have subsequently continued to detail, relies for evidence on the cases where this process misfires, where—whether through inadvertence or misunderstanding—the resulting text reveals the traces of its precursor. These momentary lapses should not, however, detract from the overall accomplishment of these works' authors. Their compositional practice can neither be characterized as simply quotation nor as an instance of some nebulously conceived idea of influence, nor still as a case of simple plagiarism. It is instead evidence of a mode of reading, interpretation, and composition in which the prior text stands in a privileged, if not always acknowledged, place.

These works' incorporative style of text-making—the way they take over and integrate existing texts—constitutes an important part of their philological techniques. But the methods by which their authors operated extended beyond this, to the pseudepigrapha's strongly bibliographic orientation. This refers to the ways in which they evince knowledge of prior textual corpora and seek to include themselves within them, by presenting arguments for textual hierarchies, offering explicit filiations with preexisting texts, or placing themselves within the larger, often virtual, setting of a meta-text, in a way that Ronald Inden (after Collingwood) has called the articulation of a scale of textual forms.³² The *Sūtasamhitā*'s articulation of a superordinate *Skandapurāṇa*, consisting of a series of *khaṇḍas* and *saṃhitās*, is a prime example of this. Again, this is by no means unique to works composed in the Tamil country from the late eleventh century; nevertheless, there is a definite increase in such bibliographic projects

32 See the discussion in Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters and Daud Ali, *Querying the Medieval* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 48–54. Inden himself would no doubt resist this characterization, insofar as he polemically (and over-simply) rejects 'philology' as an adequate disciplinary practice (see e.g. *Querying the Medieval*, 5 ff.), understanding it *tout court* to be an instance of "contextualism" which "assumes textual essences to be material and to belong to the objective linguistic [...] structures [...] that impinge on individual authors from outside."

in the works produced there and then. More to the point, some of these projects quite explicitly localize themselves in the physical, as well as the textual, terrain of the far South.

Exemplary here is a passage found interpolated into the opening chapter of the Pañcarātra *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*. Dubbed ‘*adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ*’ (‘additional reading’) by its modern editor, this text neatly captures the effort of some reader(s) of the *Jayākhyā* to situate that work within the proliferating Pañcarātra canon, and within the temple cultures which furnished the canon’s institutional setting.³³ Evidently this passage reached its published form at some point close to the fourteenth century, almost certainly in the ancient temple city of Kāñcīpuram.³⁴ The interpolation’s author reveres what modern scholarship would agree to be three early authorities—the *Jayākhyā* itself, the *Sāttvata*, and the *Pauṣkara*—as the ‘Three Jewels’ (vs. 2) of the Pañcarātra revelation, arguing that all other scriptures are dependent on these for their authority (vv. 4–5). The author then goes on to elaborate a relation of dependence between these three leading works and what are demonstrably later temple *tantras* (respectively, the *Pādma*-, *Īśvara*-, and *Pārameśvarasaṃhitās*), which relate to the Jewels as a commentary to a root-text (vs. 6) while—unusually—each of the Jewels is said to function as a commentary on the other two.³⁵ Each of the pairs of scriptures, with the subordinate text explicitly demoted to a liturgical manual (*kāryakāri*, v. 14), is then connected with three major Vaiṣṇava temple sites of the far South, the Varadarāja temple in Kāñcī (‘Elephant Hill’ or *hastigiri*, the home to the *Jayākhyā*-*Pādma* tradition), Śrīraṅgam (*Pauṣkara*-*Pārameśvara*), and Melkote in the southern Kannada country (*nārāyaṇādri*, *Sāttvata*-*Īśvara*).

This is just one of several such efforts to rationalize the textual cosmos of the Vaiṣṇavas. But this vision of the Pañcarātra canon is especially eloquent in the

33 Existing scholarship on the *adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ* includes K.V. Soundara Rajan, “Kaustubha Prasada—New Light on the Jayakhyatantra,” in *Glimpses of Indian Culture: Vol. 2, Architecture, Art and Religion* (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1979), 26–35; Marion Rastelli, “Zum Verständnis des Pañcarātra von der Herkunft seiner Saṃhitās,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 43 (1999): 51–93; and Robert Leach, “The Three Jewels and the Formation of the Pañcarātra Canon,” unpublished paper, forthcoming; see also Alexis Sanderson, “History through Textual Criticism,” 48, n. 50.

34 On this date, see Rajan, “Kaustubha Prasada,” who is followed by Rastelli and Leach.

35 *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* 11cd–12ab: *mūlavayākhyānarūpatvād upajīvyam paraṣparam || tantratrayam idaṃ vidyād ekaśāstram tathā budhaḥ*, “These three tantras are mutually reinforcing, taking the form of root-text and commentary for each other. Thus the wise man understands them to form a single teaching.” On this last claim see Rastelli, “Zum Verständnis,” 54, n. 12 and Leach, “The Three Jewels,” 4.

way it captures the negotiation of a textual tradition in a state of evident flux, buttressing the validity of older texts while securing for them a place within the transformed world of the religious culture of Coḷa and post-Coḷa Tamilnadu. The interpolation goes on to give a lengthy description of the wondrous mythic history of Kāñcīpuram, only returning at the end of a lengthy mythic *māhātmya* of Hastigiri (vv. 20–107) to the theme of the textual authority of the pairs of *tantras*. By offering this sort of textual and locational hierarchy, and interpolating it at the head of a foundational authority, the author of the *adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ* created a meaningful philological intervention, at one stroke making sense of the complex present while supplying a warrant for future understanding.

He was hardly unique in so doing. In this, and in the long-term effects that this textual incorporation would exert, the creators of these tantric scriptures are in some ways comparable to the classical and early modern European forgers discussed by Anthony Grafton.³⁶ While it is probably going too far to globally condemn these *tantras* as ‘forgeries,’ in that they do not embody an effort to traduce or deceive their intended audiences—though recall Jayanta Bhaṭṭa’s Black-Cloaks!—still they share with the spurious European works a concerted effort to erect their own claims to authority upon the foundation of existing, putatively reliable works. More significantly, as in the case of arch-forger Annius of Viterbo’s influence on early modern European historical thought, these works adumbrated philological protocols of interpretation and composition that would provide a model for other works.

Appropriation and Adaptation: Cekkilār’s *Pēriyapurāṇam*

While tantric and purāṇic literature provides compelling evidence to document this new dispensation of text-making, this is a phenomenon which stretches well beyond just these doctrinal and ritual texts. This same sort of pseudonymous philology can be seen to remarkable effect, for example, in the literary and dramatic theory expounded in the *Bhāvaprakāśana* of Śāradātanaya, who—as we will see in the next chapter—rewrote existing authorities

36 Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) and *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in An Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), esp. 76–103 and 162–177; Anthony Grafton, Glen Most, and Salvatore Settis, eds., *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) s.v. “Forgery”. For broadly comparable Indian cases, focusing on epigraphy, see Richard Salomon “The Fine Art of Forgery in India,” in Colas and Gerschheimer, *Écrire Et Transmettre*, 107–134.

and invented new sources altogether to produce an idiosyncratic synthesis of the state of these disciplines from the perspective afforded by the local aesthetic sensibilities of the far South. The relationship between the anonymous philologists' work and that of the Tamil Śaiva poet and hagiographer Cekkīlār is more oblique, but it brings both into greater focus, like a torch's raking light held up to a bas-relief whose details are otherwise lost in shadow. Like the *Sūtasamhitā*, Cekkīlār's work was a product of the Śaiva temple centre of Cidambaram in the middle of the twelfth century; again like that Sanskrit work, it styled itself as a *purāṇa*, an account of the past.³⁷ However, the two self-styled *purāṇas* differ widely, most obviously in their language—Cekkīlār's *Pēriyapurāṇam* (the 'great' *purāṇa*) was composed in Tamil, a language with a centuries-long literary pedigree but without any necessary claim to transcendent supernatural authority. It thus could not claim for itself the privileged epistemological and narrative space of compositions in Sanskrit; it also possessed an openly professed human author in Cekkīlār, the scion of a family of landed gentry otherwise known from epigraphy.³⁸

The *Pēriyapurāṇam* is a hagiographic cycle on the lives of the *nayanmār*, the foremost devotees of Śiva in the far south, loosely structured around the life-story of Cuntaramūrtti, the last of the trio of Śaiva hymnists. In clear contrast with the workmanlike style of a self-professed *purāṇa* like the *Sūtasamhitā*, the *Pēriyapurāṇam* was a text of major formal and literary ambition. Yet it was the product of a compositional logic that was, in many ways, cognate to that of the Sanskrit pseudepigrapha, beginning from the self-description embedded in its title. There had evidently never been a *purāṇa* like Cekkīlār's when he debuted his work, or at least not within the scope of Śaiva theism. For all that the *Pēriyapurāṇam* palpably differs in subject matter and in its expressive aims from the doctrinal *purāṇas* and *tantras* preserved in Sanskrit, we can observe within it a precocious and sensitive literary reaction to their new philological orientation.

37 This survey draws upon my earlier work on both texts: see Whitney Cox, "The Transfiguration of Tiṇṇaṇ the Archer," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 48, nos. 3–4 (2005): 223–252; idem, "Making a tantra in medieval South India: the *Mahārthamañjarī* and the Textual Culture of Cōḷa Cidambaram" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2006), 59–93; idem, "From Āvaṇam to Purāṇam," *Dimensions of South Asian Religion. SOAS Working Papers in the Study of Religions*, ed. T.H. Barrett (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, 2007), 5–34.

38 On the poet and his brother's epigraphic profile, see especially Mu. Irākavaiyaṅkāṛ, *Cāsanat Tamilk kavacaritam* (1937), 70–78; an uncredited English synopsis of this can be found in K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cōḷas* (Madras: University of Madras Press, 1955), 676.

It is thus useful to briefly linger in some detail over Cekkiḷār's verse-craft, with an eye to tracking the effects of the incorporative and bibliographic philological modes in its very different textual context. There are two areas in which I will class these effects here: Cekkiḷār's self-reflexive presentation of the structure and genre of his long poem, and his conspicuous effort at a key narrative juncture at a form of textual integration. When, in its tenth invocatory verse, Cekkiḷār explicitly names his work the *Tiruttōṇṭarpurāṇam* ("the *purāṇa* of the holy devotees of Śiva"; its conventional title is a later honorific), this marks quite possibly the first time anyone had ever so described a work written in Tamil, although in its wake *purāṇam* was to prove a highly productive genre in the language.³⁹ The sense of this genre-taxon however differs from that of the *Sūtasamhitā*: the *Pēriyapurāṇam* is much closer in its form and design to the Jaina universal histories that share this title than to any brahmanical texts;⁴⁰ indeed, this adoption may have been an aggressively assimilating gesture, assimilable to the uncredited inter-traditional textual borrowings that characterize the tantric canons of the Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, and Buddhists. This polemical gesture is further evident at a deep structural level: Cekkiḷār's poem celebrates sixty-three individual *nāyaṇmār*, a pointedly identical reckoning to that of the sixty-three *śalākāpuruṣas*, the exemplary men of the Jaina tradition.

The *Pēriyapurāṇam*'s opening does, however, gesture towards the narrative conventions typical of *purāṇas* like the *Sūtasamhitā* (vs. 23–50), framing the text as the reported speech of the sage Upamaṇṇiyaṇ (Skt. Upamanyu) to a group of his ascetic followers. The sage's account, moreover, touches on

39 See V. Raghavan, "Tamil versions of the purāṇas," *Purāṇa* 2, no. 2 (1960): 225–242; David Shulman, *Tamil temple myths: sacrifice and divine marriage in the South Indian Śaiva tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); and Ludo Rocher, *The Purāṇas*, 77. Raghavan refers to a number of early examples, for example a *Purāṇacākaram* cited in a work on prosody; he further claims that the *Tiruttōṇṭattōkai* (one of Cekkiḷār's principle sources, see below) is referred to as a *purāṇam*, a claim for which he cites no evidence.

40 This is convincingly argued by Indira Peterson, "Śramaṇas against the Tamil way," in *Open Boundaries: Jain communities and culture in Indian history*, ed. John Cort (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998). A number of such works were produced in the centuries before Cekkiḷār's time in the nearby region of what is now Karnataka: Jinasena's *Ādipurāṇa*, Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa* (both in Sanskrit), Puṣpadanta's Apabhraṃśa *Mahāpurāṇu*, and Cāmuṇḍarāya's Kannada *Ādipurāṇam* (the last of these Peterson suggests as a particularly apt candidate for what she terms the *Pēriyapurāṇam*'s "shadow-text"). Peterson notes the aggressive undertone that this generic adaptation possesses, given the historic conflicts between Tamil Śaivas and Jains, an explicit topos of Cekkiḷār's account of the lives of the two *nāyaṇmār* Appar and Campantar.

the incarnational back-story of Cuntaramūrtti's life on earth; in particular, his previous birth as a heavenly courtier in Śiva's kingdom on Mt. Kailāsa, a framing narrative reminiscent of the conventions of both *purāṇa* and belles-lettres. Cekkīlār's adoption of the label *purāṇa* to describe his work was thus deliberately ambiguous, gesturing at once towards a polemical target and an authoritative textual model.

The similarities to the sort of philological practice we have been tracing do not end with the work's professed genre. Throughout, Cekkīlār's poem embeds brief quotations from the corpus of Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* hymns, principally in its narration of the lives of the three singer-poets Cuntaramūrtti, Tiruñāṇacam-pantar, and Tirunāvukkaracar. In a sense, the *Pēriyapurāṇam* serves as the only early commentary to this corpus, interpreting individual hymns as reflections upon moments in the *nāyaṇmār*'s life-stories.⁴¹ More to the point, Cekkīlār remarkably—and in my reading uniquely—reflects upon his own process of poetic composition. Following upon the initial 'purāṇic' conversation where Upamañṇiyan lays out for his disciples the previous divine incarnation of Cuntaramūrtti (commonly referred to as *vanrōṇṭar*, 'the harsh devotee'), Cekkīlār addresses his audience directly:⁴²

In accord with the manner in which that great sage
did then speak of the deeds of the harsh devotee,
so now I do reverently compose here an exposition [*vīri*]
on the *Tiruttōṇṭatōkai*, of great fame among the devout.

That is to say, the fine verse-text [*narpatikam*] that is called the
true *Tiruttōṇṭatōkai*, which the harsh devotee himself uttered
through the favor of our ancient lord who dwells in the Anthill,
has been worshipfully adopted as the guideline [*patikam*] for this
[work].

41 One may contrast here the commentarial attention given to the parallel corpus of the hymns of the Vaiṣṇava Ālvār poets, above all Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymōli*: see, e.g. Francis Clooney, *Seeing through texts: Doing Theology among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas of South India* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996); and Srilata Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) To God In Śrī-vaiṣṇavism: Tamil Cats and Sanskrit Monkeys* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

42 vv. 47–49 *ēṇru māmuṇi vanrōṇṭar cēykaivai / anru cōṇṇapaṭiyāl aṭiyavar / tuṇru cīrtiruttōṇṭatōkai vīri / inr' ēṇ'ātaravāl in' iyampuken; marr'itarakup patikam vanrōṇṭar tām / purr' iṭatt' ēmpurāṇār aruṭiṇāl / cōrra mēytiruttōṇṭatōkaivai ēṇap / pērra narpatikan tōlappērratāl; anta mēyppatikatt' aṭiyārkaḷai / nantanātanā nampiyāṇṭārnampi / puntiyārap pukanra vakaiyīṇāl / vantav āru valāmal iyampuvām.*

We will compose this without deviating from the path laid out by the expansion [*vakai*] that our master Nampiyāṇṭārnampi crafted in order to fill it with the slaves of the Lord found in that true verse-text [*mēyppatikam*].

These call for some unpacking. “The ancient lord who dwells in the anthill,” first of all, is Śiva as he is worshipped in the great central Tamilnadu shrine of Tiruvārūr, while the *Tirutṭōṇṭattōkai* (“Litany of the holy devotees”) is a brief devotional composition attributed to Cuntaramūrtti himself, essentially a bare list of the names of the seventy-one individuals or collectives, all of whom the poet—and thus the text’s subsequent reciter—declares himself in a refrain to be the slave or servant (*aṭiyen*). This work provides a structuring armature, almost a table of contents, for Cekkiḷār’s long poem, hence ‘guideline’. At first glance, verse 48 seems to rely on a pleonasm: *itaṟkup patikam ... narpatikam*: “the good *patikam* is the *patikam* for this [work].” This relies on the complicated historical semantics of this noun: attested in the classical Tamil of the Caṅkam period (it is the term used for the poetic colophons attached to the decads of the *Paṭirrupattu* anthology), *patikam* is surely a *tadbhava* word, i.e. one whose etymon is found in Sanskrit but which has been morphologically altered. It can, however, be referred to either *paḍya* (‘verse’) or *pratīka* (‘image, face, lemma’),⁴³ the latter being just the term for the sort of brief prompting quotations that Cekkiḷār scatters throughout his work. Evidently aware of these two divergent etymologies, Cekkiḷār plays upon them here in a piece of meta-linguistic showmanship.

The *tōkai* text attributed to Cuntaramūrtti had earlier provided the basis for the *Tirutṭōṇṭattiruvantāti* (“Linked verses on the holy devotees”) of Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi, the supposed ‘rediscoverer’ of the Tamil Śaiva devotional corpus, the *Tēvāram*.⁴⁴ It is this latter work that Cekkiḷār claims as the proximate model for his own, the original title of which echoed the two earlier compositions. This three part series of brief authoritative text, expansion, and extended exposition was adapted by Cekkiḷār from the traditions of Tamil grammar and poetics: the terminological series *tōkai-vakai-viri* appears, for instance, in the preface

43 On these etymologies, see the *University of Madras Tamil Lexicon*, s.v. “*patikam*” 2, 3.

44 The evidence of this ‘rediscovery’ is examined with characteristic skepticism in Herman Tieken, “Blaming the Brahmins: Texts lost and found in Tamil literary history,” *Studies in History* 26 (2010): 227–243, based on the later account of the *Tirumuraikaṇṭapurāṇam*. A more hermeneutically charitable account is François Gros, “Introduction: Pour lire le *Tēvāram*,” in *Tēvāram: Hymnes Śivaïte du Pays Tamoul*, ed. T.V. Gopal Iyer (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 1984).

to Nakkīraṇār's commentary on the *Iraiyāṇārakappōṟuḷ*, an early work on the theory of erotic poetry,⁴⁵ as well as in the laudatory preface (*cīrappuppāyiram*) appended to Pavaṇanti's grammar, the *Naṇṇūḷ* (ca. 1200) as internal components of its definition of an authoritative text.⁴⁶ The use of such a model in the context of a literary work seems to mark a real innovation, almost amounting to a category error. The *Pēriyapurāṇam* thus embodies both the incorporative and the organizational-bibliographic modes of philological practice diagnostic of the new texts produced in the far South of its time.

Beyond these opening gestures, Cekkīlār's great poem evinces a voracious assimilation of other modes of contemporaneous writing, in a manner that suggests a creatively oblique appropriation of exactly these same methods. This can be seen, for example, in the repurposing of the terms of a Śaiva theological controversy in its account of the wild hunter-saint Kaṇṇappar (vv. 650–830).⁴⁷ More pointed, and of greater significance to the narrative of the *Pēriyapurāṇam* as a whole, is Cekkīlār's sardonic integration of the protocols of the everyday textual culture of his twelfth-century world within his poem. The Tamil country under the Coḷa emperors witnessed an enormous efflorescence of those documents preserved through lithic inscription;⁴⁸ this is only an index of the far wider proliferation of documentary textuality within the social world of the time. The surviving inscriptional records directly attest to this, in their references to land registers, legal decisions, affidavits, etc., all of which would have been recorded on the fragile medium of palm leaves. It is with an eye set on this perhaps newly ascendant documentary order that Cekkīlār structured one of his *purāṇam*'s central narrative set-pieces, the calling to the Śaiva path of Cuntaramūrtti (often called Cuntarar, 'Handsome'). Although the aims of his adaptation of the norms of non-literary, non-learned writing differ from that

45 The *Iraiyāṇār* text is ascribed in its commentary, incidentally, to Śiva: it marks one of the earliest (and most influential) exceptions to works in Tamil being unable to claim a pedigree of direct divine authorship.

46 *Iraiyāṇārakappōṟuḷ*, 12–13. *Iraiyāṇār* admits of several kinds of textual authority (*nūḷ*), comprising *mutal* ('original'), *vaḷi* ('[following the] path'), and *cāru* or *puṭai* ('peripheral' or 'partisan') works. The three taxa *tōkai-vakai-vīri* are described in a verse, ostensibly the citation of an earlier authority; the reference to these in the *Naṇṇūḷ*'s *cīrappuppāyiram* (ln. 11) notably contradict the testimony of Pavaṇanti himself, who employs the alternative scheme. The model easily maps onto the canonical arrangement of a Sanskrit *śāstra*, with an authoritative *sūtra*, a critical *vārttika*, and an extensive *bhāṣya*, first seen in the grammatical tradition and widely imitated in other knowledge systems.

47 See Cox, "The Transfiguration of Tiṇṇaṇ."

48 See above, p. 19.

of the incorporative philology of his time—and Cekkīlār's poetic project sets him apart from the didactic, doctrinal methods of contemporaneous Sanskrit pseudepigrapha—it is still worthwhile to closely read just a few pieces of this verse narrative, to see the transformations of the incorporative methods in his hands.

The story of Cuntarar's calling, the *Taṭuttāṭkōṇṭapurāṇam* or 'The *purāṇa* of the Intercession' (vv. 147–350), can be considered the primal scene of Tamil Śaiva *bhakti*, which sets the tone for Cekkīlār's whole long poem. The early part of Cuntarar's life is a study in worldly perfection: born in a lineage of observant Śaiva brahmans in the *brahmadeyam* of Nāvalūr, Nampiyāruraṇ (who would adopt the name Cuntaramūrtti later; both are epithets of Śiva) came of age in an idealized world of learning and cultivation. As Nampi enters adolescence, and the arrangements for his wedding begin, Cekkīlār—prefiguring his narrative's central moment—focuses in upon the itinerary of a letter written on palm-leaf as it is carried from Nāvalūr to the village of Puttūr, home to the boy's would-be future in-laws. This palm-leaf letter, meant "to set the day" (*kurittunā! olai*, vs. 156) is formally met with by a party of Nampi's fiancée; it is the first of several such text-artifacts that the poet focuses in upon.

On the wedding day itself, moments away from the rite's climax, an uninvited guest suddenly arrives, an old man claiming unfinished business with the bridegroom. We, the audience, are already in on the big secret: the elderly Brahman is Śiva himself (vv. 175–178, 181). The scene Cekkīlār describes possesses a real dynamism, as the gathering crescendo of the wedding festivities is suddenly muted by the mysterious old man, and as the initial good will and hospitality offered to the guest by Cuntaramūrtti gives way to slowly building confusion and anger. The Brahman insists that the bridegroom is his slave, and brandishes a palm leaf document (*olai, āvaṇam*) attesting to the fact: the document is signed, it would seem, by young Cuntarar's grandfather. Finally, the handsome and genteel—but rather sheltered and high-strung—young man from Nāvalūr loses his temper (vv. 190–191):

āvaṇam parikkac cēṇr' avalaviṇil antaṇālaṇ
kāvaṇatt' itaiyey oṭak kaṭitu piṇ rōṭarntu nampi
pūvaṇattavarai urrār avaralār purāṇkaḷ cēṇra
ev'aṇ accilaiyiṇārai yār toṭarnt' ēṭṭa vallār

maṇikaḷ āyiṇa munporri malarpatam parri ninra
iraivaṇait toṭarntu parri ēlutum āḷolai vāṅki
araikalal aṇṇal ālā antaṇar cēyṭal ēṇṇa
muraiy ēṇak kīriyittāṇ muraiyittāṇ muṭivilātāṇ

As Nampi stepped forward to seize the bond,
 the brahman ran from the wedding hall,
 Nampi pursued hard on his heels and grabbed
 that One who dwells in Pūvaṇam.
 Who else could chase down and grapple that One
 Whose arrow-nocked bow once destroyed the demons' cities?

He chased down and seized the Lord,
 Whose flower feet are grasped only after first praising the Vedas.
 That man, his anklets tinkling, grasped the written bond of servitude,
 "A brahman made a slave? What is the justice in this?" he said,
 and he tore it in two.
 But the One without limits had spoken true.

Cekkiḷār's language subtly inflects the scene's incongruity. The word for 'document,' *āvaṇam*, begins the first of these verses, and so sets the keynote to its pattern of front-rhyme. The moment depicted there is an absurd one, with the fit young brahman bridegroom chasing down and tackling his elderly accuser, and the rhyme at the head of each line picks up this strain and magnifies it. Cekkiḷār tacitly sets the scene against Śiva as the indwelling presence in one of his temple homes (*pūvaṇattavar*, the god of Tribhuvanam⁴⁹) and as figured in mythology (*ev'aṇ accilaiyiṇār*, literally Śiva with 'that arrow-set bow'; here *ev'aṇ accilai* fulfills the rhyme scheme with a burst of unexpected abbreviation). Alongside the steady pattern set by the *ētukai*, however, the structure of the verse lurches through a series of staccato parataxes: Cuntarar leaps for the palm leaf, Śiva scampers away; Cuntarar is hot on his heels; he catches up to him; who but he could do this? In the next verse, by contrast, Cuntarar remains at center stage, appealing to his family and guests before ostentatiously destroying the offending evidence.

Already, we can see that the crux of the narrative hangs on an otherwise banal scrap of text, as an unassuming cadjan leaf becomes the source of contention between the mysterious stranger and our quick-tempered hero. What follows is, to say the least, unexpected: God insists that they go to court. Telling Cuntaramūrtti that the original document (*mūlavolai*) is held in his home, the *brahmadeyam* of Veṇṇēynallūr, the disguised Śiva sets out, with the wedding party in his wake. There, the proceedings take what we may, with David

49 This probably refers to a site in modern Thanjavur district between Kumbhakonam and Tiruvidaimarudur.

Shulman, characterize as a turn to the Kafkaesque, as a surreal deliberation takes place before the members of the town's governing *sabhā*.⁵⁰ While the eminent men of the town first wonder aloud at exactly the same outrage as Cuntaramūrṭti—can a brahman be made a slave, even to another man of his caste?—the old man, the 'trickster' or 'master of *māyā*' (*māyai vallan*, v. 202) continues to insist that the original palm leaf document be produced, to substantiate his claim. As the old man produces the original deed,⁵¹

The councilmen looked at the palm in the hands of the One
Whose throat is shrouded in darkness, and gave their assent.
The council's *karaṇam* bowed and took the bond.
Removing the cloth in which it was wrapped, he opened it and,
noting its age, he read it aloud,
while the learned men of the *sabhā* marked his words.

This verse, with its closely observed details of the *karaṇam* or clerk going about his business, immediately conjures up the world of the official written world in Cekkīlār's day. These details of housing original documents, and of assessing the validity of prior claims to property are the stuff of the surviving epigraphical texts, pieces of officialese here distressingly introduced into the uncanny scene of the deliberations of Cuntaramūrṭti's future. The real centerpiece here, however, is what follows:⁵²

'This is the deed of Ārūraṇ, Ādiśaiva of Nāval, town of the rare Veda:
This document does affirm that I hereby do render myself and
all my descendants to perpetually serve Pittaṇ of Vēṇṇēynallūr, a great
sage.
Being of sound mind and body, I have written this.
Attesting to this, here is my signature.'

50 David Shulman, *Songs of the harsh devotee: The Tēvāram of Cuntaramūrṭtināyaṇār* (Philadelphia: Dept. of South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1990), xv–xvii; see also xxvii–xxxiv.

51 v. 204: *iruṇmurai miṭṭarṇ kaiyil olai kaṇṭ' avaiyōr eva | arulpēru karaṇattāṇum āvaṇan tōḷutu vāṅkic / curalpēru muṭiyai nikki viritt' ataṇ rōṇmai nokkit / tēruḷpēru capaiyōr kēṭpa vācaṇaṇ cēppukinṇāṇ.*

52 v. 205: *arumaṇai nāval āticaivaṇ ārūraṇ cēykai / perumuṇi vēṇṇēynallūr pittaṇukki yānum / ēṇpāl varumuṇai marapuḷ orum vaḷittōṇṭu cēytark' olai / irumaivāl ēḷuti nernten itark' ivai ēṇṇēḷuttu.*

We see here a piece of totally mundane, official language, from its formulaic circumlocutions to the mention of its authorizing signature. This is the sort of thing that literally covers every available surface of the temples of the region, in what are only the surviving fragments of what must have been an infinitely more wide-ranging public discourse, carefully and ingeniously crafted into rhymed, metrically complex Tamil verse.⁵³ What follows, with the members of the *sabhā* checking to see that, yes, in fact the signature matches a sample of Cuntarar's grandfather's hand, fills out the intentionally absurd proceedings. With his new servant trailing behind, the old man enters the town's temple and disappears, and Cuntarar, realizing what has transpired, sings his first hymn, on Vēṇṇēynallūr, beginning his life of wandering the Tamil countryside and composing inspired songs of praise to the many locales of its Śaiva religious landscape.⁵⁴

What to make of this reliance on the notarial norms of the public textual culture of the time? Taking what was no doubt an already circulating story about Cuntaramūrtti, Cekkīlār is able to draw the story into much higher relief, pushing against the tension between the comfortably everyday world of shared public lives and selves and the radically inassimilable nature of the transcendent, what is after all precisely the stakes in the *nāyaṇār*'s coming to the Śaiva path. We can see here that much of the considerable literary power of Cekkīlār's religious epic can be profitably understood as a radicalization of the methods that were distinctive of the philologies we have been tracing, a radicalization that nearly prefigures the heteroglossic novel in its desire to integrate as many as possible of the linguistic registers proximate to it.

53 Orr's discussion of bonded slavery in the Coḷa period is highly suggestive: while slavery was never a major feature of the epigraphical record, she notes that the final period of Coḷa rule was marked by a relatively dramatic increase, with more than ninety percent of all references to slaves found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Leslie Orr, *Donors, Devotees and Daughters of God: Temple Women in Medieval Tamilnadu* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118). Save one reference to (presumably male) temple drummers and occasional mentions of the male offspring of slave women, almost every recorded instance of a slave is female, mostly involved in menial kitchen labor. This potentially adds another dimension Cekkīlār's depiction of Cuntaramūrtti's crisis, as the heteronomy of enslavement takes on additional, gendered undertones. To be a Brahman and a man is to be doubly removed from the plight Cekkīlār depicts here.

54 The famous first words to this *patikam*—*pittā pīraicūṭi*, 'Madman, moon-crested!'—are quoted by Cekkīlār in v. 220. Notice that the name with which Cuntaramūrtti addresses Śiva here, *pittan*, is the same as that found in the document produced before the *sabhā* in v. 205, cited above. Cekkīlār deliberately literalizes the earlier poetic effusion of the *Tevāram* poem by retroactively recording the name as that of a party to the contract.

To be certain, the new philology is not the single solvent in which to dissolve all of the questions raised by the *Pēriyapurāṇam*, any more than it resolves at a stroke all of the problems of the cultural history of this time and place. The *Pēriyapurāṇam* is a literary masterpiece and a work deeply invested in an overwhelming vision of devotion to God, and it certainly should not be entirely reduced to the self-aware application—or perhaps the equally self-aware parodic adaptation—of the habits of textual scholarship. Nevertheless, it cannot be totally dissociated from these practices. Cekkilār's complex engagement with the emotional energies of southern Śaivism, and his ambivalent reflections on the transvaluation of social norms and the limits of such transformations within a normative religious ethics,⁵⁵ are crucially orientated by his wide-ranging adaptations and homages, and his explicit efforts to craft a new generic model for his great work.

There is a discernable social project at work in Cekkilār's poem, just as there is in his Cidambaram brahman contemporaries' *Sūtasamhitā*. The Tamil Śaiva poet, a member of the landed élite of the northern marches of the Coḷa kingdom, wrote at a time when the centuries-long imperium of that dynasty had begun to give way to a newly fissiparous political and social order. In its attempt—at once scholarly and poetic, devotional and parodic—to integrate the different registers of his contemporary world within the ambit of a Śaiva religion framed in Tamil, Cekkilār's project in the *Pēriyapurāṇam* seems at once conservative and revolutionary, an effort to negotiate a future through the resources of the textual past.⁵⁶ And it was an effort that would prove remarkably successful: Cekkilār's *purāṇam* on the Tamil Śaiva past was to exert a powerful reality effect, becoming in effect the sole lens through which to

55 To briefly gloss two recent interpretations of Cekkilār: see Anne Monius "Love, Violence, and the Aesthetics of Disgust: Śaivas and Jains in Medieval South India," *The Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004); and Sascha Ebeling, "Another Tomorrow for Nantanar: The Continuation and Re-Invention of a Medieval South-Indian Untouchable Saint," in *Geschichte und Geschichten. Historiographie und Hagiographie in der asiatischen Religionsgeschichte*, ed. Peter Schalk et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2010), 433–516.

56 See Cox, *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry*, and compare Heitzman's conclusions (*Gifts of Power: Lordship in an early Indian state* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997)) when describing the secular trend of 'intermediate authorities' coming to identify more with the royal center, precisely as they began to exercise more independent authority; see esp. 202: "Increasingly in the twelfth century, and almost completely in the thirteenth, local contacts become buried beneath lordly titles and official transactions, perhaps an appropriate response to the shifting political fortunes as the empire disintegrated."

view that past: “C’est le mirage de Cekkīlār,” as one of his most acute modern readers put it, “auquel l’historien tente vainement d’échapper car le passé qu’il reconstruit ne se dissociera plus de notre magicien du XII^e siècle et de ses suggestions impératives.”⁵⁷

Conclusions: Looking Ahead

Cekkīlār was precocious in his adoption of the techniques of his world’s anonymous philologists in the early years of the waning of Coḷa imperium. In the generations that followed his, the Coḷa imperium continued to unwind, as the work of tantric and purāṇic philology continued and, if anything, intensified. From at least the first part of the thirteenth century, authors composing conventional works of scholarship—works which they claimed as their own, and not as the products of revelation—were necessarily faced with the task of reckoning with this great proliferation of anonymous texts, both those which were the products of their own milieux and works that had been on the syllabus since time out of mind. As legatees of this textual dispensation, scholars were faced with both a spectrum of potential problems—the authenticity of their sources first among them—but also with the possibility of the strategic adoption of the philological tools that their anonymous forebears had used in their own works. The very same methods of textual incorporation and bibliographic organization could be added to the skills that emerged from a classical śāstric education—the deep-seated habit of taxonomic organization, the use of the disputational methods of logic, or the fine-grained skills at textual analysis used in hermeneutics or in literary theory—to produce a new and innovative form of philological scholarship that could hold its own among the traditional knowledge-systems.

The formation of this new, properly ‘authorial’ style of textual scholarship can be seen by way of the three case studies found in the following chapters. In their reaction to and application of the modes of philology we have been following, we can clearly trace the effects of their reception in these works, and begin to understand the new forms of knowledge and of textuality that this reception enabled. As with Cekkīlār, these authors’ works cannot be reduced to simply a response to the stimulus afforded by the anonymous philologists: all three operated at the intersection of the new tantric texts and classical śāstras of great antiquity and authority. And like Cekkīlār’s innovative forging of the

57 Gros, “Introduction: Pour lire le Tēvāram,” xii.

purāṇam as a literary mode in Tamil, all three authors were preoccupied by the problem of newness, with the creation of new methods of study and the confection of new hybrid textual genres.

Bearing the *Nāṭyaveda*: Śārādātanaya's *Bhāvaprakāśana*

Introduction: *Nāṭya* as a Form of Knowledge

The first of the three examples of an attempt at reconciliation between the methods of the purāṇic and tantric philology and the priorities of śāstric scholarship is by far the closest to its models. Śārādātanaya's *Bhāvaprakāśana* ("On the Displaying of Theatrical Emotion") was framed largely in the same simple *anuṣṭubh* verse of the *tantras* and *purāṇas* and was contiguous with them in its uncomplicated Sanskrit style; it embodied an encyclopedic intention that would have been familiar to a reader of the *Sūtasamhitā*. Though it ranged widely in its subject matter, on occasion wandering into the same metaphysical fields as the pseudepigrapha, Śārādātanaya's text was centrally concerned with the theory of the Sanskrit drama—its genres, its performance techniques, and its auxilliary disciplines of music, gesture, and costume—along with important asides into literary theory and the philosophy of language. In this, it recapitulated several centuries of dramatic theory's complex interaction with poetics, *alaṃkāraśāstra*.

The discipline of *nāṭya* or dramatic performance was nearly the oldest of the Sanskritic literary sciences; only *chandaḥśāstra* or metrics, with its pedigree as a Vedic auxilliary, claimed greater antiquity. Its oldest authority, which continued to possess theoretical precedence through the entire history of the tradition, was the *Nāṭyaśāstra* ascribed to the sage Bharata. This long work provides a salutary reminder of the antiquity of the techniques seen in the tantric and purāṇic compositions of the medieval South. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* is framed as a conversation between the sage and a group of his disciples; Bharata is a patently mythical figure, the inventor of the drama who had served as the dramaturge of the founding performance in heaven. Also like the tantric and purāṇic works, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the product of a synthesis of precursor texts. For at least some modern critics, this process of text-making resulted in as a hodgepodge of unreconciled sources and incoherent combination.¹ The sys-

1 This is the position doggedly pursued in S.A. Srinivasan, *On the Composition of the Nāṭyaśāstra* (Reinbek: Inge Wezler, 1980); cf. J.C. Wright, "Vṛtti in the *Daśarūpakavidhāna* of the *Abhinav-*

tematic study of the drama thus existed in relative isolation from the formalist poetics of the early works of *alaṅkāraśāstra*: for the foundational southern theorist Daṇḍin, dramaturgy represented “another tradition” (*āgamāntara*) entirely.² But as the text attributed to Bharata contained in its sixth chapter the *locus classicus* for the theory of *rasa* or aestheticized emotion, it was to take on a new significance in the course of the conceptual revolution that occurred within poetics in Kashmir from the mid-ninth century.³ This new importance culminated in Abhinavagupta's magisterial commentary of the early eleventh century, the *Abhinavabhāratī*, one of Śāradātanaya's most important sources. The great Kashmirian savant, in the course of his effort to create a unified, synthetic theory of *rasa*-experience, had himself been forced up against the heterogeneous bulk of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Throughout his commentary, Abhinavagupta firmly maintains that the work was a unified, coherent text, and that Bharata was its sole author; yet even he sees it as a multi-voiced text that had been subject to interpolation, as can be seen in his reformulation of the nature and status of *śāntarasa*, the emotion of beatific calm.⁴ The need for a less unruly textual authority for dramatic theory evidently supplied the motivation for another of Śāradātanaya's major sources, the conjoint text of the *Daśarūpaka* (‘The Ten Dramatic Forms’) of Dhanañjaya and its commentary the *Avaloka* (‘Observations’) of Dhanika, possibly Dhanañjaya's brother. This work, probably composed in the Paramāra capital of Dhārā in the final decades

abhāratī: a study in the history of the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26 (1963): 92–118.

- 2 Daṇḍin, *Kāvyādarśa*, 2.367; similar is 1.31ab, *miśrāṇi nāṭakādīni teṣām anyatra vistaraḥ*, for which cf. Bhāmaha, *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, 1.24d (*ukto 'nyais tasya vistaraḥ*). On the split between the theory of poetry and drama, see Edwin Gerow, *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 74–78.
- 3 On this conceptual revolution, refer to Lawrence McCrea, *The teleology of poetics in medieval Kashmir* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- 4 On the unity of the text, see his comments *ad Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.2 (and cf. Srinivasan, *On the Composition of the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 3–5); for the discussion of *śānta* as a subsequent interpolation, refer to V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1975), 15–19, and his own text of the *śāntarasaprakaraṇa* (116): after an extended discussion of the theoretical possibility of *śānta* and of its representability in literary and dramatic art, Abhinava accepts that the definition of *śānta* can in fact be found “in old manuscripts,” giving a text-place following the prose after 6.45 (*ciraṇtanapustakeṣu 'sthayibhāvān rasatvam upaneṣyāmaḥ' ity anantaraṃ śānto nāma śamasthāyibhāvātmaka ityādiśāntalakṣaṇaṃ pathyate*). Abhinavagupta, though a remarkably astute close reader of his sources, argues for the textual evidence only after his extensive śāstric *carcā*; he makes no mention whatsoever of this passage where he claims it to be in the text.

of the tenth century, demonstrates the growing sophistication of dramatic theory even outside of Abhinavagupta's commanding synthesis.⁵ While centrally occupied with the details of the theory of dramatic genre and plot structure—its account of these topics is without equal—the *Daśarūpaka*'s investment in the theory of the functions of literary language demonstrates that *nāṭya* had come to occupy an intellectual niche extending beyond stagecraft and into the philosophy of language, paralleling the changes in *alaṃkāraśāstra*. Dhanañjaya and Dhanika's treatment of these issues is especially valuable in that it supplies a sympathetic précis of the theories of Bhaṭṭanāyaka, whose lost works are otherwise only accessible through Abhinavagupta's distortive criticism and adaptation.⁶

Literary theory and dramaturgy had become intertwined subjects, and had achieved new levels of intellectual complexity and ambition for some centuries prior to Śāradātanaya's time. His decision to produce a synthetic overview of the tradition cast in a form similar to that of the *tantras* and *purāṇas* appears from this perspective as a step backward, a middlebrow banalization of a sophisticated *śāstra*. What could have motivated this return to a compositional style most closely resembling Bharata's ancient treatise, in the context of a field that had become dominated by scholarly monographs like the *Daśarūpaka* or learned exegeses like Abhinava's? And how do we account for the

5 I say 'probably' because, despite the seemingly universal acceptance of the *Daśarūpaka*'s composition in the court of the Paramāra king Muñja (ruled ca. 975–997), the evidence in support of this is in fact very slight. Dhanañjaya concludes his work with the claim that he “revelled in the sophistication of King Muñja's assemblies” (4.87cd: *muñjamahīśagoṣṭhī-vaidagdhyaḥjā*), but the king is given no imperial titles, and Dhanañjaya makes no reference to Dhārā, the Paramāra dynasty, its origins in the *agnikula*, *et cetera* (contrast the account in *Navasāhasāṅkacarita* 11.68 ff.). There were other kings called Muñja: one such figure, a Cālukya underlord of the Sinda family, issued a copper-plate inscription in 1082 in which he was styled *muñjamahīpati*, similar to the *Daśarūpaka* verse (see *Epigraphia Indica* 3, no. 43, ll. 15, 19, 28). Bhoja's encyclopedic *alaṃkāra* works, products of the same court written a generation after Muñja, evince no knowledge of the *Daśarūpaka* or its characteristic doctrines; Pollock—who is otherwise resolute in attributing the conjoint work's composition under the Paramāra king—admits that this “would seem to be impossible” (Sheldon Pollock, *A Rasa Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 155). The only possible exception to this—a single verse quoted in the *Sarasvatikanṭhābharaṇa* that Dhanika claims as his own (cited and discussed in Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, 668)—does not appear especially probative.

6 This has been established by Sheldon Pollock, “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka saying?” in *Epic and Argument in Sanskrit Literary History: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Goldman*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Delhi: Manohar, 2010), 143–184; *idem*, *A Rasa Reader*, esp. 156.

success of such a seemingly retrograde work? For the *Bhāvaprakāśana* was certainly a success: it became the standard point of reference for many subsequent authors writing in the south, among them Śiṅgabhūpāla, Kumārasvāmin, Tippabhūpāla, and Rāghavabhaṭṭa, even coming to possess the dubious distinction of becoming the default source for whatever scrap of dramaturgical verse an author might happen to remember.⁷ We can see here influence that the self-assumed authority of the purāṇic and tantric style may have exerted on subsequent later readers; this may equally tell us something significant about Śāradātanaya's decision to adopt it in the first place. To write in this way may by his era have become second nature for men of a certain level of education and ability, and so in Śāradātanaya we may have the best picture of the magpie-like assimilative mind that was the common feature of the anonymous author-philologists to whom we owe the great bulk of the Sanskrit written in this place and time.

But there is more at work in the *Bhāvaprakāśana* than just the importation of these methods into a different kind of *śāstra*. Through a close inspection of Śāradātanaya's use of the techniques of bibliographic organization and textual integration in two key chapters of the text, we can reconstruct the theoretical as well as the compositional originality at work in his text. To anticipate, Śāradātanaya seeks to steer a course between the avant-garde glamor of the innovative poetics associated with Kashmirian thinkers and the priorities of a tacit local theory of aesthetics, above all, an insistence on the 'internalist' view of the workings of literary language. Though this latter commitment had a pan-Indic pedigree—it can be seen in another of the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s important sources, Bhoja's *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa*—it seems to have possessed an especially firm hold on the sensibilities of southern literati.⁸ In order to substantiate this—and

7 On these attestations, see K.S. Ramaswami Sastri's introduction to his edition (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968), 9, 74; *anuṣṭubh* verses supplying definitions of elements of performance are also attributed to the '*Bhāvaprakāśa*' by Vidyācakraṇartin (*ad Alaṃkārasarvasva, sūtra* 5, defining *ālasya*) and Rāmacandrabudhendra (*ad Bhartṛhari's Nītiśataka* 75, defining *kaṭākṣa*). Rāmacandra correctly cites the text with the same label two other times (*ad Śṛiṅgāśataka* 36 and 64, defining *smera*, citing 120, ll. 19–20), suggesting quotation from memory and inadvertent misattribution. The same should probably be said for Vidyācakraṇartin, rather than positing the existence of a different *Bhāvaprakāśa(na)*, as Janaki suggests in her Introduction to the *Alaṃkārasarvasva* (Delhi: Meharcand Lachhmanadās, 1965, 13): both misattributed verses are in a style similar to Śāradātanaya's.

8 For recent interpretations of the *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa*, see Sheldon Pollock, "Bhoja's *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa* and the problem of rasa: a historical introduction and translation," *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques* 70, no. 1 (1998): 117–192; idem, *The Language of the Gods*, 105–114; and Whitney Cox, "Bhoja's Alternate Universe."

to give a brief glance at another, intercommunicating tradition of philology—the chapter ends with an examination of the parallel developments in Tamil literary and dramatic theory just prior to or contemporaneous with Śāradātanaya's lifetime. Although the *Bhāvaprakāśana* was a resolutely monoglot work of cosmopolitan Sanskrit (with a few Prakrit verses thrown in), its project can best be understood as an extension of the priorities of earlier scholars who had themselves worked exclusively in Tamil. This suggests a process of formal experimentation and linguistic cross-pollinations at the intersection of a complex network of ideas, agents, languages, and texts.

At Śāradā's Side: The Author and His Work

Śāradātanaya was a man who cited much and was in turn himself much cited, allowing him to be quite securely placed in time, around 1175–1250 CE.⁹ He is more difficult to pin down in space: while it is entirely certain that he was a man of the Tamil-speaking South,¹⁰ what little information his readers have comes from the brief autobiographical sketch with which he begins. Following upon invocatory verses to Gaṇeśa (figured as a theater-goer, dancing with delight), Kṛṣṇa, Śiva and Sarasvatī, Śāradātanaya describes how his great-grandfather Lakṣmaṇa, of the Kaśyapa *gotra*, lived in “the village of Māṭharapūjya, home to a thousand brahmans, in the southern part of the great country called Merūttara”.¹¹ The resemblance between this name and the famous northern Tamilnadu *brahmadeya* of Uttaramerūr has long been noted, but no further information appears to be forthcoming to corroborate this identification.¹² He

9 This date is that of the work's best editor, K.S. Ramaswami Sastri, working in concert with Yadugiri Yতিরাজ Swami of Melkote (Introduction, 76).

10 This can be determined on both external and internal evidence. All of the surviving MSS. of the *Bhāvaprakāśana* are found in the South, which was also the region of all the authors citing the work. In the geographical excursus that ends the text, Śāradātanaya gives a list of the sixty-four *janapadas* into which the southern portion of the mythical super-continent of Bhāratavarṣa is to be divided (309ff.); in this list, the three kingdoms of the Tamil country are given pride of place (309, ln. 17: *pāṇḍyāḥ sakeralās colāḥ*), and in the closely following list of eighteen regional languages, he reports the Dravidian languages first (310, ln. 10).

11 *Bhāvaprakāśana* (hereafter *Bhāva*) 1, ll. 12–14: ... *janapado mahān | merūttara iti khyātas tasya dakṣiṇabhāgataḥ || grāmo māṭharapūjyākhyo dvijāsāhasrasammitaḥ | tatra lakṣmaṇanāmāsīd viprah kaśyapagotrājaḥ ||*

12 Thus Ramaswami Sastri (Introduction, 11–12), followed by Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 95 (though he is mistaken when he locates Uttaramerūr near Madurai). Ramaswami

goes on to report that his grandfather had worshipped Śiva in Varanasi in order to obtain a son;¹³ his own father Bhaṭṭagopāla, in turn had similarly propitiated Śāradā, thus accounting for the author's name. His relationship to this goddess was to prove central to Śāradātanaya's life, as he proceeds to tell his readers in a third-person account of his text's genesis:

One time, he had come to pay homage to the goddess Śāradā, attending her bathing-ceremony during her festival procession in the month of Caitra. The goddess was set in a dancing-pavilion, along with a group of spectators; bowing, he was permitted by these people to sit at her side. He watched as actors, skilled in the art of representing *bhāva*, were performing each of the thirty different kinds of drama; then he asked the beneficent goddess for the *nāṭyaveda*, knowledge in the dramatic arts. A brahman called Divākara was the master of the theatre. Right then, the goddess herself enjoined him to teach the *nāṭyaveda*.

For his part, he was happy to do it: the doctrines of Sadāśiva, of Śiva and his wife, of Gaurī, of Vāsuki, of the Goddess of Speech herself, and of the sage Nārada, Agastya and Vyāsa—teaching those doctrines of the pupils of Bharata, as well as those of Hanūmān, the son of Añjanā, he taught him the entirety of the *nāṭyaveda*.

And Śāradātanaya studied these, in the goddess' presence; abstracting the essence from these, he thus composed a book, entitled *The Displaying of Theatrical Emotions*, for the good of the adherents of the *nāṭyaveda*.¹⁴

Sastri also suggests that a reflex of the place-name Mātharapūjya might be seen in the modern Brahman surname Madabhushi; I have no opinion on this.

- 13 While this might be taken to count against the southern provenance of our author, it is instead yet another piece of evidence suggestive the intense world of brahmanical mobility in this period. The mid-twelfth century Śaiva liturgist Jñānaśiva, who was likely Śāradātanaya's grandfather's contemporary, was another Tamilian who travelled to Varanasi (and possibly back again: see Goodall, "Problems of Name and Lineage," 212n).

- 14 *Bhāva*, 2, ll. 7–22: *kadācic chāradām devīm upāsitum upāyayau | upāsyā savanam tasyāś caitravātrāmahotsave || āsinām nartanāgāre tām devīm prekṣakiḥ saha | praṇamya tair anujñātas tasyāḥ pārśa upāviśat || triṃśatprakārabhinnāni rūpakāṇi prthak prthak | naṭaiḥ prayujyamānāni bhāvābhinayakovidaiḥ || dṛṣṭvā sa devīm varadām nāṭyavedam ayācata | nāṭyaśālāpatiḥ kaścit divākara iti dvijaḥ || tayaiva nāṭyavedasya nityukto 'dhyāpane tadā || prītas so 'pi sadāśivaśya śivayor gauryā matam vāsuker vāgdevyā api nāradaśya ca muneh kumbhodbhavavyāsayoḥ | śiṣyānām bharataśya yāni ca matāny adhyāpya tāny añjanāśūnor apy atha nāṭyavedam akhilaṁ samyak tam adhyāpayat || śāradātanayo devyāś tām adhitya ca sannidhau | ādāya saram etebhyo hitārthaṁ nāṭyavedinām | bhāvaprakāśanam nāma prabandham akarot tadā ||*

This brief account captures something significant about Śāradātanaya and his long work. There is, first of all, its ingenuous quality: he would have his readers know that this extensive treatise on the theater had its origin in the effusions of a theatrical amateur and *bhakta* of his namesake goddess. In this profession of enthusiasm, Śāradātanaya shows the intellectual and cultural profile of those many anonymous others who chose to write in the tantric and purāṇic style. He also shows the limitations characteristic of this class of author: as elsewhere, Śāradātanaya's control over his Sanskrit medium tends to get away from him, especially when he attempts to write something more challenging than the forgiving 'epic' *anuṣṭubh*: the verse detailing Divākara's syllabus is a long and tedious anacoluthon cast in the complex *śārdūlavikrīḍita* lyric meter. But this same verse shows how much Śāradātanaya worked within the bibliographical imagination of the anonymous philology: some of the various deities and sages mentioned there reappear at certain points in the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s presentation, but the very real library of works with attributed mundane authors that Śāradātanaya evidently consulted in the course of his writing goes unmentioned.¹⁵

Śāradātanaya's closeness to the *paurāṇika* or *tāntrika* authors is something that asserts itself throughout his long work. When, at the beginning of the text's tenth and final *adhikāra*, he turns abruptly to the origins of his discipline, he composes in a style indistinguishable from a *purāṇa*.¹⁶ The passage is based around a receding frame-narrative, and structured as a series of dialogues between mythic figures: Manu addresses his father the Sun, who relates a conversation between Brahmā and Viṣṇu, Brahmā's instruction in the *nāṭyaveda* by Nandikeśvara at Śiva's behest, and Brahmā's transmission of this teaching to five brahman disciplines. In an *echt*-purāṇic touch, these first human proponents of the divine teaching are enjoined to 'bear this *nāṭyaveda*,' *nāṭyavedam bharata*, in a quaint etymological explanation of the name for the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s purported author, and for a common Sanskrit noun for 'actor.' Throughout, the *Bhāvaprakāśana* displays the digressive, prolix style familiar from the

15 Two of the *Daśarūpaka*'s critically important verses on the question of *rasāśraya* are attributed to Sadāśiva in the sixth *adhikāra* (*Daśarūpaka* 4.36–37 = *Bhāvaprakāśana* 152, ll. 17–21, introduced as *proktaḥ sadāśivenaiva* [following the reading of the Melkote ms., see Appendix 2, 405]); Vyāsa is cited twice (*Bhāva*, 55, ln. 21 and 251, ln. 21), the second time along with Hanūmān (*vyāsāñjeyaguravaḥ prāhuḥ*). On Vāsuki and Nārada, see further in the chapter.

16 *Bhāva*, 284, ln. 5–287, ln. 15; interestingly, this passage contains some of the most sophisticated writing in the whole of the *Bhāvaprakāśana*: it shows both a surer command on *recherché* forms, and a metrical variety in its selection of variant *vīpulā* scansion.

pseudepigrapha. When, for instance, at the opening of his seventh *adhikāra*, he announces his intention to speak 'briefly' (*saṃkṣepeṇa*) about the place of vocal music in dramatic performance, Śāradātanaya proceeds over the next seventy-two verses to give a sketch of cosmogony, embryology, physiology (of both the physical and the subtle body), and phonetics, bringing us up from the creation of the universe to the point when air passes out of a singer's throat as the notes of the gamut; the passage also demonstrates his familiarity with the metaphysical teachings peculiar to the Śaiva *tantras*.¹⁷ Here and elsewhere, Śāradātanaya, for all his seeming lack of rhetorical polish, sets about his work in a spirit of winningly artless *naïveté*.

It has long been recognized that the *Bhāvaprakāśana* is rife with quotations and recastings, beginning with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and extending up to Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa*. But Śāradātanaya should not be misunderstood as simply the legatee of other, more original thinkers.¹⁸ Relative to the received consensus in *nāṭya* and *alaṃkāraśāstra*, a crucial area of his theoretical independence is the work's overriding emphasis on *bhāva*, the linguistic, thematic, and practical raw materials for the production of aestheticized emotion or *rasa*. This emphasis is signaled already in his treatise's title and its opening *maṅgala* verse, in a way that contrasts markedly with the tendency of other late-medieval works interested in questions of dramatic or literary theory to topicalize *rasa* in their titles (*Rasārṇavasudhākara*, *Rasakalikā*, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, *et cetera*). This emphasis is further borne out in the structure of Śāradātanaya's presentation: he begins his text with a lengthy typology and analysis of the *bhāvas*, and he develops his explanation of the ways that artistic language functions through constant reference to these elements rather than their endpoint, while acknowledging their final culmination in the production of *rasa*.

Bharatavṛddha, Śiva, Padmabhū, Vāsuki

Perhaps the clearest case of Śāradātanaya's self-consciously synthetic project can be seen in his habit of invented quotation, where he attributes a text or a concept to someone other than its acknowledged author: this is a technique

17 *Bhāva*, 181, ln. 17–188, ln. 22; he begins with a survey of the thirty-six reality levels (*tattvāni*) accepted by initiatory Śaivism.

18 The foundational work on these source texts was, once again, by Ramaswami Sastri: see his Introduction, (63–71 ["Śāradātanaya's Indebtedness"], especially the table on pp. 64–67).

drawn straight from the playbook of the purāṇic and tantric philologists. Distortive quotation or quotation from memory is not unusual in authors of *śāstra*, but in Śāradātanaya's hands this rises to the level of a major compositional principle. This is not simply a matter of authorial disingenuousness or inability; Śāradātanaya's recastings are instead directed towards his effort at reconciling the priorities of a southern poetics with the wide spectrum of avant-garde literary theory. It was to this task of reconciliation that he employed the methods of the earlier anonymous philologists, the reliance on which enabled him to posit textual authorities for his own theoretical syntheses, while at the same time refashioning the patent text of the many works that the *Bhāvaprakāśana* brings together. After its genealogical and autobiographical proem and a versified table of contents, the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s opening chapter limns an exhaustive taxonomy of the different varieties of *bhāva*, beginning with its major divisions into *vibhāva* (catalyst), *anubhāva* (consequent), *sāttvika* (physical symptom), *sthāyin* ('stable' or thematic emotion) and *vyabhicārin* ('incidental' or inflecting emotion). The rest of the first chapter is given over to filling in details of this basic typology, and the interaction of its various components. The work's second *adhikāra* begins in a similar vein, providing etymological explanations for each of the thirty-three *vyabhicārins*. This taxonomic presentation gives way to a more significant question of theory, the crucial matter of the emergence of *rasa* from all of these duly catalogued precursors.

The canonical answer to this question had been set ever since the *Nāṭyaśāstra*: the *sthāyibhāva*, as inflected by the other elements of the taxonomy, is transformed into *rasa*. Thus *rati* or desire, in the presence of a love-object, fitted out with representations of moonlit gardens and buzzing bees, and accompanied by descriptions of passing emotions like anxiety, is transformed into *śṛṅgāra*, the erotic *rasa*. But this appeal to the basic mechanism leaves unaddressed precisely the problems that had preoccupied theorists for several centuries, such as the locus of *rasa*-experience, the number of allowable or realizable *rasas*, and the ontological and moral status of these experiences.¹⁹ It is when faced with these problems that Śāradātanaya turns to the strategy of creative philology.

Śāradātanaya's major resource here is the shambolic textual bulk of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. In notable contrast to Abhinavagupta's efforts to assert the unitary character of the text attributed to Bharata, Śāradātanaya divides the text into several authorial voices, as can be seen in his major statement of the thematic emotion's transformation into *rasa*:

19 Refer now to the comprehensive overview in Pollock, *A Rasa Reader*, 19–33.

vibhāvādyair yathāsthānapraviṣṭaiḥ sthāyinaḥ smṛtāḥ |
caturbhiś cāpy abhinayaiḥ prapadyante rasātmatām || (a)
vibhāvaiś cānubhāvaiś ca sāttvikair vyabhicāribhiḥ |
ānīyamānaḥ svāduṭvaṃ sthāyī bhāvo rasaḥ smṛtaḥ || (b)
vyañjanauśadhisamyogo yathānnaṃ svāduṭamī nayet |
evaṃ nayanti rasatām itare sthāyinaṃ śrītāḥ || (c)
evaṃ hi nāṭyavede 'smin bharatenocyate rasaḥ |
tathā bharatavṛddhena kathitaṃ gadyam īdṛśam || (d)

yathā nānāprakārair vyañjanauśadhaiḥ pākaviśeṣaiś ca saṃskṛtāni vyañ-
janāni madhurādirasānām anyatamenātmanā pariṇamanti tadbhoktṛ-
nām manobhis tādṛśātmatayā svādyante tathā nānāprakārair vibhāvādib-
hāvair abhinayaiḥ saha yathārham abhivardhitāḥ sthāyino bhāvāḥ sāmā-
jikānām manasi rasātmanā pariṇamantas tādātvikamanovṛttibhedabhīn-
nāḥ tattadrūpeṇa tai rasyante. (e)

nānādravyauśadhaiḥ pākair vyañjanaṃ bhāvīyate yathā |
evaṃ bhāvā bhāvayanti rasān abhinayaiḥ saha || (f)
iti vāsukināpy ukto bhāvebhyo rasasambhavaḥ |
tasmād rasās tu bhāvebhyo niṣpadyante yathārhatāḥ || (g)²⁰

The thematic emotions, which have already been described, attain the status of *rasa* through the catalysts and other components when these are properly deployed along with the four types of performance techniques. (a)

The thematic emotion is considered a *rasa* when it is made delightful [svādu°] through the catalysts, the consequents, the bodily symptoms, and the incidental emotions. (b)

Just as the combination of curries and herbs will make rice delicious [svādu°], so these others, [properly] arranged, transform the thematic emotion into *rasa*. (c)

This is the way that Bharata has explained *rasa* in the *Nāṭyaveda*; so too this has been taught, in prose, by the elder Bharata: (d)

Just as curries, prepared with cooking herbs of various kinds and out of [other] ingredients, transform into one of the [six] flavors, beginning with sweet, and are enjoyed by those who eat them, thinking them to have that flavor, so too the thematic emotions, as they are appositely

20 *Bhāva*, 36 ln. 7–37 ln. 2, with my added sigla, a–g.

augmented by the various kinds of triggers and other *bhāvas* and accompanied by performance techniques, transform into *rasa* in the mind of the spectators and, as they are differentiated by the workings of the mind at that particular moment, are savored by them in various different forms. (e)

As a curry is produced through different methods of cooking with various herbs and [other] ingredients, so *bhāvas*, together with the techniques of performance, produces the *rasas*. (f)

So it was taught by Vāsuki, that the *rasas* are born from the *bhāvas*; thus, the *rasas* are produced from the *bhāvas*, as according to their capacity. (g)

From the perspective of propositional content, this is unambitious stuff, repetitively told: the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s authoritative position that the *rasas* proceed from the *bhāvas*, and not the other way around, is repeatedly emphasized,²¹ and the general sense of the passage seems merely to repeat the boilerplate doctrine of dramatic *rasa* arising due to the presence of the various contributory factors. But just beneath the surface of Śāradātanaya's presentation, there are multiple levels of textual legerdemain at work. Three of the verses (a, d, g) appear to be entirely from Śāradātanaya's own hand: these are essentially linking passages, introducing topics, naming authorities, and supplying conclusions. One (b) is a direct though unacknowledged borrowing of the *Daśarūpaka*'s leading statement about the nature of *rasa*, with a single albeit significant variant,²² while the remaining two verses (c and f) and the prose passage (e) are based wholly

21 The *Nāṭyaśāstra* entertains the question of whether *bhāvas* may be said to arise from *rasas*, or whether they may be said to be mutually constitutive (vol. 1, 292–293); Abhinavagupta (ad loc.) defends the unidirectional *bhāva*-leads-to-*rasa* doctrine, but seems sheepishly attracted to the idea of *parasparasambandha* (the *bhāvas* only acquire their significative ability in the wider context of a dramatic performance, and so derive from their innate connection with *rasa*). This passage is discussed—and its coherence characteristically questioned—in Srinivasan, *On the Composition of the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 27–32.

22 *Daśarūpaka* 4.1 is identical save for reading *svādyatvaṃ* ('the state of being savored') for *Bhāvaṇaprakāśana's svādutvaṃ* ('[being] delightful'). If this change is original to Śāradātanaya (it could possibly result from a proleptic error for *svādutvaṃ* in the next verse), this introduces a small but meaningful change to the argument, as a *bhāva*'s being experienced by the spectator is central to Dhanañjaya's new epistemology of *rasa*, adopted from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (see Pollock, "What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka saying?") Śāradātanaya, committed as we shall see, to a *bhāva*-centered model of aesthetic 'throughput,' may have deliberately made the change to render the claim more ambivalent.

or in part on material gleaned from the Nś. The two verses are close adaptations of Bharata's defense of the unidirectional *bhāva-to-rasa* model: *f* is almost identical to *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.35 (the first quarter of which reads slightly differently²³), while *c*'s first half is identical to 6.37ab.²⁴ In the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and entirely in keeping with the text's forensic, deliberative style, both of these verses are given as the preexisting views of some other authority, introduced by the prose tag *bhavanti cātra ślokāḥ* ("there are some verses on this matter").²⁵ Yet Śāradātanaya explicitly assigns the first of these—half of which consists of Śāradātanaya's own words—to Bharata himself, while the other is given as the teaching of the mythical serpent Vāsuki, one of the authorities mentioned in his introductory account.

Set within this complex web of borrowings, fictive attributions and reinventions, the passage ascribed to *bharatavṛddha*, 'the elder Bharata,' is particularly significant. It is, first of all, formally distinct, the longest of the few brief passages in prose scattered throughout the text. Despite the attribution (and in contrast to some earlier scholarship²⁶), I consider these words to be Śāradātanaya's own, based on the model of the celebrated prose passage that is found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s sixth chapter, immediately before the verses that provided Śāradātanaya with the raw material for *c* and *f*. This reads:

ko drṣṭāntaḥ? atrāha yathā hi nānāvyañjanauṣadhidravysaṃyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ tathā nānābhāvopagamād rasaniṣpattiḥ. yathā hi guḍādibhir dravyavyañjanair auṣadhibhiś ca śāḍavādayo rasāḥ nirvartyante tathā nānābhāvopetā api sthāyino bhāvā rasatām āpnuvanti. atrāha rasa iti kaḥ padārthaḥ. ucyate. āsvādyatvāt. katham āsvādyate rasaḥ. yathā hi nānāvyañjanasaṃskṛtam annaṃ bhuñjānā rasān āsvādayanti sumanasāḥ puruṣā harṣādīṃś cādhigacchanti tathā nānābhāvābhīnayaavyañjitān vāgaṇ-

23 *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.35a reads *nānādravyair bahuvīdhair*. On this verse see Srinivasan, *On the Composition of the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 28ff., who notes that it is only found in part of the Nś transmission; true to form, he suggests (31) that the verse is an accretion, "but I for one am unable to state why transmitters should have added it."

24 Srinivasan, *On the Composition of the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 27–28 constitutes the text differently, largely on the testimony of editions other than the GOS.

25 This was first noticed by Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas*, 11.

26 Ramaswami Sastri, while clearly aware of the dubious attributions in this passage, was nevertheless inclined based on the "striking resemblance" between the two prose passages to accept this as genuine testimony of a pre-*Nāṭyaśāstra* doctrine (35). Contrast the more considered judgement of K.M. Varma, *Seven Words in Bharata: What do they signify?* (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1958), 126–127.

*gasattvopetān sthāyibhāvān āsvādayanti sumanasah prekṣakā harṣādīṃś
cādhigacchanti. tasmān nāṭyarasā ity abhivyākhyātāḥ*²⁷

What could serve as an example of this? He replies: just as flavor arises due to the combination of substances such as various kinds of curries and herbs, so *rasa* arises due to the coming together of various kinds of *bhāvas*. Further: the flavors of, for instance, a sweet are developed by ingredients and condiments like treacle as well as by herbs; and so it is that the thematic emotions, replete with the various *bhāvas*, attain the status of *rasa*. What sort of thing is *rasa*? He answers: [It is the way that it is] because it can be savored. How is *rasa* savored? Just as thoughtful men, when they eat rice that has been prepared with various curries, savor the flavors and so feel happiness and other [pleasant sensations], so thoughtful spectators savor the thematic emotions as they are manifested by various *bhāvas* and performance techniques and accompanied by reactions in the voice and the body: they feel happiness and other such sensations. Thus the *rasas* of the theatre are exhaustively described.

The relationship between these two passages is thin, but telling. The central gustatory analogy is of course shared, as are some traces of language (*vyāñjanauṣadhi-*, *nānābhāva*, etc.). But the words that Śāradātanaya attributes to Bharataṣṭhāyī are surely his own, and not that of some earlier source, much less an otherwise lost precursor of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. First of all, in its clear insistence on the presence of *rasa* in the awareness of the spectator, the passage takes its mark from the post-Abhinavagupta era of aesthetic theory. As Pollock has emphasized, this marks a watershed in the history of Indic aesthetic thought, a new epistemology of *rasa* that necessitated a transformed ontology of the phenomenon.²⁸ So it seems clear that Śāradātanaya is consciously reworking a *locus classicus* to produce something similar, yet distinct enough to claim an independent authority.

But there is a further complication. In producing this invented citation of the elder Bharata, Śāradātanaya introduces an innovation, one that almost amounts to a category error. In speaking of the thematic emotions as “differentiated by the workings of the spectators’ minds at that particular moment,” *tādātṭvikamanovṛttibhedabhinnāḥ*, and so enjoyed by the different spectators in

27 Cf. once again Srinivasan, *On the Composition*, 32–42 for a lengthy discussion on the composition and meaning of these lines in the Nś.

28 See especially Pollock, “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka saying?”, 144–146 and *A Rasa Reader*.

differing ways, he suggests something startlingly original. In notable contrast to his sources from Kashmir and Dhārā, for whom all *sahṛdayas* experience the same thing,²⁹ Śāradātanaya has Bharatavṛddha articulate the idea of a variability of aesthetic response, as if his supposedly ancient authority had been reading up on Wolfgang Iser. Moreover, he does so using language that reveals his authorial thumbprint: the word *tādātvika*- “at that particular moment”, while not unique to the *Bhāvaprakāśana*, is of rare occurrence elsewhere; Śāradātanaya uses it again at the end of the same *adhikāra*.³⁰

There are thus two different strategies at work even in this small piece of text. Faced within a potentially controversial question—for so the emergence of *rasa* and its locus had proven to be for earlier theorists—Śāradātanaya resorts to citation, as many a scholar would, then and now. Although he had canonical authorities ready to hand, and although the main point of his presentation was by his time the *śāstra*'s accepted common sense, he obscures his real indebtedness to the *Daśarūpaka* (and possibly alters the work in the process), claims that words belong to Bharata (or ‘Bharata’), which the patent text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* assigns to anonymous others, and reassigns the same work's own *siddhānta* to a different, equally supernatural source. Into this complex mix of creative citation, he inserted his own prose *ḍṛṣṭānta*, written in the manner of an homage, in a similar but stylistically and lexically distinct register from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and attributed to an imaginary proto-text. This allowed him to retrofit the ancient comparison between the enjoyment of a good meal and the enjoyment of theatrical emotion with *au courant* notions of aesthetic reception, adopted from Abhinavagupta or his epigones. But it also supplied Śāradātanaya with a citational cover story for his own variation on the received themes of literary and dramatic theory. For a modern reader it seems completely self-evident that different people respond in different ways to the same work of art. Yet in so arguing—and so suggesting that not only does aesthetic impact differ among individuals, but was adventitious and dependent

29 See Pollock, “Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*,” 139 and McCrea, *The teleology of poetics*, 114–117 on the centrality of the *sahṛdaya*'s normative “aesthetic competence” in the *Dhvanyāloka*.

30 *tādātvika* occurs in *Arthaśāstra* 2.9.22 (this is the source of Apte's definition “spendthrift”); in a sense similar to Śāradātanaya's here, it is found in Kumārila's *Ślokavarttika*, Vācaspati Miśra's *Bhāmātī*, as well as sporadically in later Mīmāṃsā scholarship. In this sense, it is a word that is part of a later śāstric technical jargon that is distinct from the idiom of an archaic text like the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Śāradātanaya uses the word once again at 52, In. 7, *tādātvikena pramadādyanubhāvena vāsitaḥ ... svādaḥ saḥṛdayānām*, “the enjoyment of sophisticates is infused by the consequent reactions, such as intoxicated delight, as they occur at that particular moment.”

on circumstance (“differentiated by the workings of the mind at that particular moment”)—Śāradātanaya wrote against the grain of centuries of thinking.

Nor was this just a momentary slip on his part, as this notion of aesthetic contingency reoccurs later in the chapter, occasioning another of its philological inventions. Following upon the flurry of real and spurious quotations, Śāradātanaya returned to his own authorial voice, addressing the ontological status of *rasa*, whether it can be circumscribed by any of the basic categories of Vaiśeṣika atomism: Is it a substance? An abstraction? A quality? An action? An inherent relation? Rejecting all of these, he affirms the cognitive nature of aestheticized emotion—it is “a mental change, conditioned by external objects, brought into prominence by the performance elements, beginning with the catalysts”.³¹ This seemingly intuitive concession that *rasa* is a mental event proves significant. Śāradātanaya then argues for the mental significance of all the *bhāvas* as well, even those that are purely physical, such as actors’ reactions or elements of stage properties, as they supply the motives or causal bases for the mental operations that result in *rasa*, the locus of which (in good Abhinavaguptan fashion) is affirmed as exclusively in the consciousness of the spectator. And while the thread of the *Bhāvaprakāśana*’s argument is not always easy to follow here, this conventional affirmation enables Śāradātanaya to return to his theme of variability:

A taste that gives pleasure to the mind is called ‘savor’ [*rasa*], and that [same word] is applied to the erotic mood, since it is itself something pleasurable. And so it is basically the case with the others: their being classed as *rasa* is established through some reason or another. But just as each and every kind of flavor (such as things that are sweet), once eaten, becomes a savor for each and every man depending on the vagaries of where and when he may eat it, so it is the case that everywhere in the world there have been (and will be, and are) men who are friendly, indifferent, and inimical to each other—among these men, what for one man is an instance of the erotic is ridiculous to another, and what is wonderous to one may be pathetic to another. So it is that, due to their complementary admixture, the various moods, starting with the erotic, exist for theatergoers. Since all of these give pleasure, as they are ‘tasted’ [*svādyāh*] by the members of the audience, and so come to be called ‘*rasa*’. People’s characters [*prakṛtīnām*] differ, as do their circumstances, and the

31 *Bhāva*, 37, ll. 9–10: *vikāro mānaso yas tu bāhyārthālambanātmakaḥ | vibhāvādyāhitokarṣo rasa ity ucyate budhaiḥ*.

mind varies from moment to moment: so it is that a single individual 'tastes' them all. And though this is the reason why they should be called *rasas*, the masters are divided in their opinion.³²

Not all of this is entirely clear: the connection between ideas, whether rhetorical or logical, is at times feeble, and in this we can see once again Śāradātanaya as a figure of the world from which the purāṇic and tantric authors had emerged. But his commitment to the idea of the variability of *rasa*-experience is strongly present. There follows upon this a brief discussion on the mechanism of *rasa*'s emergence—whether it is manifested, directly denoted, or otherwise implicitly communicated: topics he returns to at much greater length in the sixth *adhikāra*—before returning to the differences of the subjective constitution of the human person, and how aesthetic response correspondingly differs.³³

Rasa is brought into being and perfumed by the consequents like intoxicated joy [in the case of *śṛṅgāra*]; through the performance of these various forms, it is clearly manifested for the theatergoers. It is inferable through one's own experience, consisting as it does in the light of consciousness and joy. It shines forth in outwardly existing objects as ego [*ahaṃkāra*] and self-regard [*abhimāna*]. I will now teach the real nature of *ahaṃkāra*, *abhimāna*, and the rest.

In the course of these two and a half *śloka*s, Śāradātanaya's argument abruptly changes, moving into an explicitly metaphysical register. He goes on to describe how the *paramātman* gives rise to a primordial set of three "brilliances"

32 *Bhāva*, 40, ll. 4–16: *manaso hlādajananaḥ svādo rasa iti smṛtaḥ || śṛṅgārasya sa yujyeta tasya hlādātmakatvataḥ | anyeṣāṃ rasatā prāyaḥ siddhā kenāpi hetunā || yathā nṛṇāṃ tu sarveṣāṃ sarve 'pi madhurādayaḥ | bhuktā rasātmatām yānti deśakālādibhedataḥ || tathā jātā janiṣyanto jāyamānāḥ parasparam | parasparasya sarvatra mitrodāsīnaśatravaḥ || teṣu kasyāpi śṛṅgāro hāsyāḥ kasyacid eva saḥ | adbhutas sa ca kasyāpi kasyāpi karuṇo bhavet || evaṃ saṅkarato 'nyonyāṃ deśakālaguṇādibhiḥ | śṛṅgārādyāḥ sadasyānāṃ bhavanti hlādānā yataḥ || tasmāt sāmājikaiḥ svādyā rasavācyā bhavanti te | prakṛtīnāṃ ca bhinnatvād avasthādivibhedataḥ || manasaḥ kṣaṇikatvāc ca tān ekaḥ svadate yataḥ | tato'pi rasavācyāḥ syur ity ācāryā vyavasthitāḥ ||*

33 *Bhāva*, 41, ll. 5–9: *pramadādyanubhāvena bhāvito vāsito rasaḥ | tattadrūpasyābhinayaḥ saṃyeṣu vyajyate sphuṭam || saṃvitprakāśānandātmā gamyaḥ syātsvānubhūtitāḥ | ahaṅkārahīmānātmā bāhyārtheṣu prakāśate || ahaṅkārahīmānādisvarūpaṃ kathyate 'dhu-nā |*

(*prabhā*, *prabhāsa*) of knowledge, awareness, and action. Evidently based on the cosmological descriptions in the *tantras*, in its terms and its details this seems to be unique to the *Bhāvaprakāśana*. The passage is lengthy—it runs for forty-eight verses—diffuse, and at times obscure, but its general purport is clear: it describes the emergence of *rasa* from the *bhāvas* as the outcome of a set of conjoint cosmological and psychological processes, in which the interaction of the individual's mental apparatus and the external world sets in motion the stirrings that eventuate in *rasa*-experience. This apparatus is apportioned to a series of discrete but interacting factors, with *ahaṁkāra* or ego as the dominant element subserved by *buddhi*, *manas*, *abhimāna*, *saṁkalpa* and the various parts of the sensorium. This description of the psychophysical constitution is then applied to the matter at hand.³⁴

Ego is threefold, because of the distinction of the three *guṇas sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Through this distinction of the three *guṇas*, that [kind of] ego which is connected with *sattva* is the *vaikārika*; that ego [*indriyādi*] becomes the basis for the senses. That [ego] connected with *tamas*, i.e. *bhūtādi*, becomes the basis of the qualities of sound [*et cetera*]. As for the [ego] connected with *rajas*, *taijasa*, it provides assistance to both of these. The activity of the ego is known as the sense of self [*abhimāna*]. That activity which consists of the sense of self operates within the range of the various senses, as corresponding to outward objects. This transforms into the various *rasas*, *śṛṅgāra* first among them. Once in that condition, it further differentiates through the distinctions of the various excitant conditions. When pleasing excitants, grounded in their particular significant gestures, are present in the basic emotion through the physical signs of emotional states and the transient affects, the minds of the spectators abide in *rajas* and *sattva*. A pleasant modification [of the mind] connected with this state is begun; it acquires the label '*śṛṅgārārāsa*' and is enjoyed by [the spectators].

34 *Bhāva*, 43, ll. 9–22: *ahaṁkāras tridhā so 'yaṁ sattvādiḡṇabhedataḥ | sattvādiḡṇabhedena yo 'haṁkāras tu sāttvikah || vaikārikaś cendriyādir indriyaprakṛtir bhavet | bhūtādis tāmasaḥ śabdatanmātraprakṛtir bhavet || rājasas taijasaḥ so 'pi dvayorūpaḥ karoti hi | ahaṁkārasya vṛttir yā so 'bhimānaḥ prakṛtitaḥ || sābhimānātmikā vṛttis tattadindriyagocarā | bāhyārthālambanavati śṛṅgārādirasātmataṁ || yāti tatra vibhāvādibhedād bhedam prayāti ca | vibhāvā lalitāḥ sattvānubhāvavyabhicāribhiḥ || yadā sthāyini vartante svīyābhinayasamśrayāḥ | tadā manaḥ prekṣakāṇāṁ rajassattvavyapāśrayi || sukhānubandhī tatarāto vikāro yaḥ pravartate | sa śṛṅgārārasābhikhyāṁ labhate rasyate ca taiḥ||*

He then goes on to describe the exact cocktail of elements that underlies the emergence of each of the other seven canonical *rasas*. Thus the possibility of this particular species of experience only obtains in the presence of the appropriate elements of stagecraft (performance, gesture, costume, etc.), and the theater becomes a metaphysical laboratory, with different stimuli—the various *vibhāvas*—interacting with a shifting combination of psychophysical constituents to give rise to a predictable product.

This, Śāradātanaya informs his readers, constitutes Śiva's teaching to Vivasvat the Sun-God in a work called the *Yogamālāsamhitā*, to which he goes on to attribute particular details of several varieties of dance.³⁵ But the theory on display here is transparently based on the doctrines of Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, a work elsewhere openly cited by Śāradātanaya. The *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* equally grounds its aesthetics in a Sāṃkhya-derived metaphysics, and its focus on the pair *ahamkāra-abhimāna* is a hallmark of the work's deeply idiosyncratic synthesis of Sanskrit poetic theory. V. Raghavan, the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*'s editor and Bhoja's most devoted modern proponent, noticed Śāradātanaya's dependence, and with evident irritation denied that any such work as the *Yogamālāsamhitā* could have existed, or that such an "out of the way and unheard-of" text could have proven to be a source for Śāradātanaya, given his explicit knowledge of Bhoja's great work.³⁶

Raghavan's suspicions about the *Yogamālāsamhitā* were probably well-founded. He was perhaps the best-read Sanskritist of his era, and the lead editor of the *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, and if he had never heard of a work, it likely did not exist. Then again, it may have: it could plausibly have been another of the many anonymous products of the long twelfth century.³⁷ But it is just

35 *Bhāva*, 45, ll. 14–17; cf. Cox, "Making a tantra in medieval South India," 167ff.

36 V. Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. Revised edition (Madras: Punarvasu, 1978), 485–486 quote on p. 486; he goes on to point out, prosecutorially, the *Bhāvaprakāśa*'s departures from (and thus misapprehensions of) the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. Raghavan was equally dismissive of the later *rasa*-etiology attributed to Vāsuki (Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, and cf. the condemnation in Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas*, 11–12: Śāradātanaya "has only increased confusion here, as on other topics also"). Raghavan is also aware of, but draws no wider conclusions from, the spurious attribution of the *vākyaṛtha* material in the sixth chapter to the *Kalpavallī* (Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, 486; see next section).

37 Probably the strongest argument for the actual existence of the *Yogamālā* is the discussion of dance-forms also attributed to it, which immediately follows this passage (45, ln. 18–46, ln. 20). This discussion of the nature of *tāṇḍava*, *lāsya*, *nāṭya*, *nṛtya*, and *nartana* is otherwise completely unconnected to the matter under discussion in the second *adhikāra*; the passage does however contain a single forward-pointing cross-reference to the text's

as likely, especially given what we know of Śāradātanaya's penchant for invention, that it was another imagined locus of attribution. The basic skein of the argument was adopted from Bhoja, who shared with the Kashmirian tradition the normative nature of aesthetic response. In distinct contrast, Śāradātanaya's altered presentation of the idea permitted him a quasi-theological pedigree for his claim that the varied constitution of an individual gives rise to a different emotional experience of art.

Another, more minor, case of invention follows a few pages later, when Śāradātanaya asserts that this model of the emergence of *rasa* only operates for the eight canonical sentiment, excluding *śānta*, the *rasa* of beatific calm. His argument, though not his wording, closely follows that of Dhanika's *Daśarūpakāvaloka*: spiritual exercises such as *yoga* and other form of austerities simply do not make for good theater; even if somehow represented, the absence of mental activity, the necessary condition for the arising of *śānta*, could not be induced in the spectator.³⁸ His professed source here is “the teaching of lotus-born Brahmā,” in what may be a sidelong evocation of a passage from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.³⁹ This is immediately followed by yet another account of *rasa*-etiology attributed, as earlier in the chapter, to the serpent Vāsuki's teaching to the sage Nārada. While almost identical to the *Yogamālā* version—it consists of an explanation of the Sāṃkhya constituents present in the mind that make it receptive to each *rasa*—this differs only in admitting *śānta* as the ninth possibility.⁴⁰ Here once again it seems that Śāradātanaya claims a textual warrant for his theory of *rasa* that is in all likelihood an invention. But the banal affirmation of the existence of the ninth *rasa* is quite distant from the culminating *śānta*-synthesis of Abhinavagupta, where *śānta* was elevated

final chapter (45, ln. 22: *tattattāṇḍavabhedas tu parastād eva vakṣyate*, which answers to 298, ll. 14–299, ln. 10). To presume that Śāradātanaya included this unrelated matter here simply to bolster the apparent reliability of his specious reference approaches conspiracy theory; at the very least, it suggests that he had here a genuine desire to deceive his audience.

38 *Bhāva*, 47, ll. 3–9, cf. Dhanika *ad Daśarūpaka* 4.35: *sarvathā nāṭakādāv abhinayātmani sthāyitvam asmābhiḥ śamasya neṣyate, tasya samastavyāpāravilayarūpasyābhinayāyogāt*, “We categorically reject that peace [*śama*] can serve as a thematic emotion in the dramatic genres which rely on performance techniques; insofar as it takes the form of the cessation of all outward action, it is not suited to performance.”

39 *Bhāva*, 47, ln. 10: *tasmān nāṭyarasā aṣṭāv iti padmabhuvo matam*, which may refer to *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.16ab: *ete hy aṣṭau rasāḥ proktā druhiṇena mahātmanā*. Cf. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas*, 10–11, who uncharacteristically takes this to refer to the mythical *Brahmabharata*.

40 *Bhāva*, 47 ln. 11–48 ln. 6.

to the condition of possibility of aesthetic experience as such. Śāradātanaya's ambitions are more circumscribed; he is able to salvage the inclusion of the ninth *rasa*, while acknowledging the existence (and perhaps the attraction) of a dissident position, bringing together the viewpoints of both Abhinava and Dhanañjaya-Dhanika without having to adjudicate between the two.

"Following the *Kalpavallī*"

But why did Śāradātanaya go to all the trouble? The instances of alternately inventive or mendacious philology in the second *adhikāra* of the *Bhāvaprakāśana* suggest that this does not admit of a single answer. In some cases, the invention or misattribution of a given passage allows for an authoritative synthesis of ideas that had changed over time; in others it provided an opening for the author to avoid the charge of theoretical innovation. Sometimes he seems actually intent on deceiving his readers; in others, he simply wished to be on both sides of an issue when his sources were in conflict, wishing to be for *śāntarasa* before he was against it.

That there were still other stages for Śāradātanaya's textual inventions can be gathered from his text's sixth *adhikāra*. As with other chapters of the work, it surveys a number of separate topics, the connection between which is not always obvious, but its main concern is with the theory of sentence meaning; this accounts for about 379 of the chapter's roughly 517 verses, a little less than seventy-five percent of the whole. This was one of the more controverted questions of the Sanskritic philosophy of language and long the subject of śāstric argument. Śāradātanaya's presentation of the issues here is a tribute to the methods of the integrative philology he inherited from his tantric and purāṇic predecessors, bringing together and synthesizing a broad-ranging syllabus of authors. Among these, he repeatedly draws upon Bhartṛhari, Bhoja, Dhanañjaya-Dhanika, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, many of whom he explicitly cites in the course of the chapter.⁴¹ But his most significant source for large parts of the presentation is Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa*, the major pan-Indian textbook on poetics by this time. Around a hundred and seventy verses of the chapter—thus roughly forty-five percent of the whole *vākyārtha* section—form a versified précis of its first five chapters, including both Mammaṭa's verse *kārikās* and his prose *vṛtti*.

41 He refers to *ṭikākāraḥ* (= Dhanika, 150), Bhoja (152), Abhinavagupta (160), the *Vākyapadīya* (161), etc.

So it is unexpected, though not perhaps not altogether surprising given what we have seen, to find Śāradātanaya attributing the synthesis of his sixth *adhikāra* to an altogether different source. Twice in the beginning of the chapter, he informs his audience that it is composed *kalpavallyanusārataḥ*, following or in conformity with the *Kalpavallī* ('The Wish-giving Creeper').⁴² As such, these references do not amount to much, but late in the chapter he returns to this supposed source, referring to it with the synonymous name *Kalpalatā*. And here Śāradātanaya's claim is remarkable:

The set of four verbal meanings, beginning with the directly denoted, and the [corresponding] four kinds of expressive language, beginning with the directly-denotative, have been authoritatively explained in this way in the *Kalpalatā*, and have been illustrated in the *Kāvyaprakāśa* and by myself in the current work.⁴³

The *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s indebtedness to the *Kāvyaprakāśa* here would have been readily apparent to any contemporary reader with some familiarity with *alaṃkāraśāstra*. Evidently, Śāradātanaya wishes his readers to believe that he is in possession of a work that is the source of Mammaṭa's celebrated and much commented-upon textbook. The only problem is that there is no warrant to believe such a work ever existed outside of Śāradātanaya's own citations. While there are several works peripheral to the *alaṃkāra* or *nāṭya* traditions bearing these synonymous titles, none of these could have served as Śāradātanaya's source. Ramaswami Sastri already presented convincing evidence that neither of the works entitled (*Kavi*)-*kalpalatā* by Arisimha and Deveśvara could possibly be either chronologically or doctrinally the text referred to by Śāradā-

42 *Bhāva*, 131, ll. 1–4, the opening lines of the chapter, giving an outline of its contents: *anubhūtiprakārās ca rasānāṃ gatayo 'pi ca | ābhāsās ca rasānāṃ ca teṣāṃ anyonyamelanam || tadvikalpādayo 'nye 'pi bhāvā vākyārthatāpi ca | atrābhidhīyate 'smābhiḥ kalpavallyanusārataḥ ||* "The different modes of dramatic reactions, the paths of the *rasas*, the semblances of the *rasas* and their mutual admixture, their options and other topics, still other types of *bhāvas*, and the nature of sentence meaning: we shall describe all of these here, in conformity with the *Kalpavallī*". The second early reference (142, ll. 5–6) is far more circumscribed in its scope: *priyāparādhe yāḥ kāścid avasthāḥ kathitā api | viśeṣaḥ kathyate tāsāṃ kalpavallyanusārataḥ ||* "Though certain of the conditions that occur when a lover is unfaithful have already been addressed, particular details of these shall now be described, in conformity with the *Kalpavallī*."

43 *Bhāva*, 175, ll. 18–20: *itthaṃ kalpalatāyāṃ tu vācyādyarthacatuṣṭayam || nirṇītam vācakādeś ca śabdasyāpi catuṣṭayam | tac ca kāvyaprakāśena mayātra ca pradarśitam.*

tanaya.⁴⁴ And while there is an *alaṃkāra* text called the *Kalpalatā* attributed to the twelfth century author Ambaprasāda (now only extant in the *pratīkas* found in its surviving commentary), and this text does seem to contain a section on sentence-meaning oddly folded into its discussion of *śabdālaṃkāras*,⁴⁵ it is impossible that this is Śāradātanaya's source, given the modest range of the sources with which Ambaprasāda appears to have been familiar. Taken at face value, Śāradātanaya's final reference to the *Kalpalatā* as a precursor to the immensely popular *Kāvyaparakāśa* would foreclose the possibility that he was referring to Ambaprasāda's (deservedly obscure) work. Here it really does appear as if his intention were to deceive: Mammaṭa's text was so well known, and his own dependence upon it so great, that Śāradātanaya seemingly had to invent a source prior to and thus more authoritative than the *Kāvyaparakāśa*. Though not explicitly stated, he here relies on an implicit philological criterion linking together age and authenticity: as in the case of Bharatavṛddha, Śāradātanaya claims access to an earlier authority, all the while drawing on a range of more recent texts as raw material for his own synthesis.

The *Bhāvaparakāśana*'s long account of the nature of sentence meaning, semantics and implicature is too lengthy, and the structure of its borrowings and revisions too intricate, to give a complete account here. Instead, I will focus on a single passage recast from the second *ullāsa* of Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaparakāśa*. Much of Śāradātanaya's adaptation is admirably close work, revising the various metres used by the Kashmirian and his often complicated prose into a steady stream of *śloka*-*précis*. But at a significant point in his presentation, Śāradātanaya subtly rewrites his source, deliberately changing its argument. At issue in the *Kāvyaparakāśa* passage is a subject of debate within the high-stakes world of Mīmāṃsā semantics: whether sentence meaning can be interpreted analytically, on the basis of the contribution of each separate word (the theory of the followers of Kumārila) or whether it can only be arrived at holistically, from the entire utterance (the position of the followers of Prabhākara). These are respectively known by doxographic slogans as the *abhihitānvayavāda* ('the theory of the syntactic relation of already-denoted referents') and the *anvitābhīdhānavāda* ('the theory of the denotation of syntactic relata'). The first theory, that of the Bhāṭṭas ('the followers of [Kumārila] Bhaṭṭa'), can be said to be a more reliable gloss on the theory of language taught in the *śāstra*'s *sūtra*-text, while the second, Prabhākara,

44 See once again his Introduction to the edition, 76.

45 *Kalpalatāviveka*, 105–191; the commentary's comments are based largely on the *Dhvanyāloka* and *Locana*.

theory was more in line with the understanding of the grammatical or logico-epistemological traditions.⁴⁶

The stakes of these separate interpretations of the dialectical constitution of sentences and their constituent elements had been a point of major theoretical concern to *alaṃkāraśāstra* since Abhinavagupta's commentary on Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, a text which Śāradātanaya knew well. Abhinava's comments are appended to Ānandavardhana's initial demonstration-by-example of the existence of *dhvani* or suggested meaning, the first of a series of five Māhārāṣṭrī Prākṛit verses where the reader (*ex hypothesi*, any qualified reader) can understand there to be a non-explicit meaning. As Abhinava presents things in this famous set-piece,⁴⁷ the Bhāṭṭa view depends upon a nested hierarchy of language functions: first, there is the initial transmission of meaning by the independently effective words (*abhidhā*); then, there is an apprehension of their governing sentential sense (*tātparya*); and only then—and dependent upon the perception of a surface incoherence (*mukhyārthabādhā*) of a piece of text—is there the possibility of the operation of some kind of figurative meaning (*lakṣaṇā*). Abhinava deftly and subtly incorporates this Bhāṭṭa theory through an elaborate counterfactual. He admits “for the sake of argument” (*abhyupagamamātreṇa*) that these three levels (*kākṣā*) of language function *might* be able to explain the workings of the verses quoted by Ānanda, providing in the process a seemingly sympathetic presentation of the *abhihitānvayavāda*. In the end, he argues that *lakṣaṇā* or figurative meaning, the hierarchically highest function of the Bhāṭṭas, cannot account for our understanding of the verse's implicit sense. This provides the occasion to posit yet another, superordinate function, *vyāñjanā* or implication, a synonym of the Ānandavardhana's *dhvani*, thus neatly justifying the existence of literary suggestion within the terms of the *abhihitānvayavāda*.

The difference in his presentation of the Prābhākara position is striking and immediate. Rather than conciliating his Prābhākara opponent as he does the Bhāṭṭa, Abhinava subjects the theory to the considerable force of his sarcasm. In Abhinava's hands, the essential problem is that the Prābhākara does not admit any other function than direct denotation, enlisting it to extend further and further “like an arrow” to account for complex pieces of language. This is

46 An accessible survey of these two positions can be found in Bimal K. Matilal, *The Word and the World* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106–120.

47 *Dhvanyāloka*, 18–26; translated in Daniel Ingalls, Jeffery Masson, and M.V. Patwardhan, trans., *The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 84–98.

immediately rejected as incoherent: how can there be a single function producing different results in different contexts? In fact, even admitting that there are different effects operating within a single verse amounts to accepting the *dhvanivādin's* position, since it is illegitimate to postulate different effects from a single cause. Other counterarguments are put in the Prābhākara's mouth only to be summarily cast aside. A single language-function (says the Prābhākara) is all that needs to be posited given the simultaneous nature of our cognition of sentence-meaning. How can this be (replies Abhinavagupta) when conventions do not govern sentences, but only individual words? What if we argue, then, that conventions only apply to the individual words and that final meaning is an effect of those factors? Then, Abhinava responds with a flourish, the *arvitābhidhāna* theory falls to pieces, as the word meanings—thought to be subsequent to the sentence-meaning—are now forced to bear a causal relationship to the same sentence-meaning. The Prābhākara—mockingly referred to as *śrotriya*, 'learned brahman'—might as well accept that he himself is an effect of his own great-grandson (*nūnaṃ mīmāṃsakasya prapautraṃ prati naimittikatvam abhimatam*).

Mamṃaṭa, himself more a synthesist than an original thinker, does not retain Abhinava's waspish scorn, but follows him in this ranking of the relative value of the two Mīmāṃsā positions. And in adopting the text of the *Kāvyaparakāśa* as his raw material, Śāradātanaya in turn makes something new of it (see Table 1):

TABLE 1 Bhāvaparakāśana and Kāvyaparakāśa compared

<i>Bhāvaparakāśana</i> , p. 160, ll. 13–17	<i>Kāvyaparakāśa</i> , pp. 25–27 (κ = <i>kārikā</i> , v = <i>vṛtti</i>)
<i>śabdāarthayoḥ svarūpaṃ tu</i>	v: <i>krameṇa śabdāarthayoḥ svarūpaṃ āha:</i>
<i>tad vivicyābhidhīyate </i> <i>śabdas tridhā vācakaś ca</i> <i>tathā lākṣaṇiko 'pi ca </i> <i>vyañjakaś ca</i>	κ: <i>syād vācako lākṣaṇikaḥ</i> <i>śabdo 'tra vyañjakas tridhā </i> v: <i>atreti kāvye eṣāṃ svarūpaṃ vakṣyate:</i>
<i>tadarthaś ca</i> <i>tridhā vācyādibhedataḥ </i>	κ: <i>vācyādayas tadarthāḥ syuḥ</i> v: <i>vācyalakṣyavyaṅgyāḥ</i>

TABLE 1 Bhāvaprakāśana and Kāvya prakāśa compared (cont.)

<i>Bhāvaprakāśana</i> , p. 160, ll. 13–17	<i>Kāvya prakāśa</i> , pp. 25–27 (κ = <i>kārikā</i> , v = <i>vṛtti</i>)
<p><i>tātparyārthaḥ padārthebhyo</i> <i>vākyārtho'stīti kecana </i></p> <p><i>vācyādir artho vākyārtha</i> <i>iti prābhākarādayaḥ </i></p>	<p>κ: <i>tātparyārtho 'pi</i> <i>keṣucit </i></p> <p>v: <i>ākāṅkṣāyogyatāsaṃnidhivaśād</i> <i>vakṣyamāṇasvarūpānām</i> <i>padārthānām samanvaye tātparyārtho</i> <i>viśeṣavapur apadārtho 'pi vākyārthaḥ</i> <i>samullasatīti abhihitānvayavādinām matam.</i></p> <p><i>vācyā eva vākyārtha ity</i> <i>anvitābhīdhānavādināḥ</i></p>
<p>But [we can] discriminate and explain the real nature of word and meaning [as follows:] word is threefold: denotative, figurative, and suggestive,</p> <p>and meaning is also so divided into denoted, etc.</p> <p>The meaning of a sentence is the overall meaning, which arises from the individual word meanings—this is the way that some people describe it.</p> <p>The Prābhākaras and others say that the sentence meaning *is the (set of) meanings, the denoted, etc.</p>	<p>[v:] He successively speaks of the real nature of word and meaning [κ:] In this, let word be threefold: denotative, figurative, and suggestive. [v:] 'In this' [means] 'in a literary work.' He will subsequently explain the real nature of these. [κ:] And let their meanings be the denoted, etc. [v:] i.e. the denoted, the figured, and the suggested. [κ:] For some people, there is also an overall meaning. [v:] When there is a connection of the word-meanings (whose nature will be explained momentarily) owing to syntactic expectancy, semantic cohesion, and proximity, a sentence meaning—the overall meaning— becomes manifest. This has the form of a particular, though it is not itself the meaning of a word. This is the theory of the supporters of the <i>abhihitānvayavāda</i>. The supporters of the <i>anvitābhīdhānavāda</i> [say] that the meaning of a sentence is solely the denoted meaning.</p>

Śāradātanaya makes two changes here. First of all, he fails to exemplify part of the prose gloss on a single *kārikā* root-verse.⁴⁸ More anomolous, however, are the changes he introduces to both the wording and the sense of his epitome of Maṃmaṭa's dismissively brief description of the *anvitābhīdhānavāda*, the Prābhākara's holistic theory of meaning. According to Śāradātanaya's rewriting, the basic criticism of the Prābhākara position, that it fails to account for the different levels of meaning, is replaced by a bald affirmation of the idea that sentences *can* in fact embody multiple meaning functions.

This is not, I think, evidence of his misunderstanding or mishandling of his sources. Nor was Śāradātanaya simply being idiosyncratic: there were other authors of the far South (including Maheśvarānanda) who wished to hold the semantics of the Prābhākara and the poetics of the *dhvanivāda* together.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, I do not think it adequate to claim that Śāradātanaya and his countrymen were just showing a dogged loyalty to the Prābhākara position, which was the dominant Southern tradition of Mīmāṃsā. Rather than simply reproducing rote parochial loyalties, Śāradātanaya's emphasis here seems to subserve a distinct perspective on some of the basic problems of poetics. One way to approach this difference of emphasis would be, following Barthes, to speak in terms of a writerly rather than in the readerly effect of textual language.

This marks a significant departure from the post-Abhinavagupta dispensation in *alaṃkāraśāstra*, where the dominant question had come to be that of the nature of aesthetic reception. The desire to incorporate the holistic theory of meaning may have then been motivated by a counterveiling emphasis on the practical side of a poet's labor with language: text-making, after all, relies on the nuances that emerge from the very specific texture of an utterance, on the meaningful juxtaposition of particulars. This constructive holism might

48 He returns to this passage later in the chapter (175, ll. 3–10, just before his spurious reference to the *Kalpalatā*, in fact) where he once again introduces a number of changes to Maṃmaṭa's wording.

49 Another parallel case can be seen in the *Dhvanyālokalocanakaumudī* of Uttuṅḡodaya, a minor Malayali king who composed his extensive commentary on Abhinavagupta's text around the beginning of the fifteenth century. Uttuṅḡodaya totally reverses Abhinavagupta's rhetorical emphases on these two positions. In commenting on the end of Abhinavagupta's discussion of the *abhihitānvaya* position, he writes (118): *samprati prābhākaramatānurodhibhir apy anujñeyo'yaṃ vyañjanavyāpāra iti vaktum ujñrmbhāṇaḥ kaumarilapakṣapratikṣepaparvaṇi labdhalakṣatām ātmana upakṣipann upasaṃharati*, "Now, as he begins to explain that this power of suggestion should also be admitted even by the followers of the Prābhākara doctrine, [Abhinava] gives the following conclusion, while pointing out that he has achieved his purpose in the course of his rejection of the Kaumārila position."

have found congenial the Prābhākara's resolute commitment to the emergence of meaning from words *qua* relata rather than the more atomic scrutiny—the gaze of the literary critic—that the Bhāṭṭa view seems to provoke (and in fact did provoke, as in the fine grained formalism of Abhinava's *explications du texte*).

For all that Śāradātanaya is writing under the influence of the mature reception-oriented form of Kashmirian literary theory, it is obvious that he is departing from this model in crucial ways. As with his defense of the variability of reception, this marks a real distinction between Śāradātanaya and the Kashmirian theorists, enabling him to reverse the priorities of his inherited models while retaining their terms and their characteristic style of argument. In collapsing the distinction between the two Mīmāṃsā theories, Śāradātanaya's interest appears to have been in the effect of the whole that the Prābhākara theory enables. And this in turn connects up the overall theme of the *Bhāvaprakāśana*, its titular emphasis on the combinatorics of *bhāva*. If we understand the dramatic work of art to consist in a shifting array of catalysts—with emotional tenor, verbal styles, thematic elements, dramatic plot-types or stage properties all ultimately reducible to the typology of *bhāvas*—then the entire task of a playwright is to arrange these elements into a cohesive order so that the final meaning—*rasa*—may emerge. This provides a ready analogy to the Prābhākara hypothesis of sentence meaning, where syntax precedes and provides the condition of possibility for semantics.

Thus to write off Śāradātanaya as either incompetent or misleading would miss the point. Within the *Bhāvaprakāśana* itself, his philological inventions possess an integral logic: Śāradātanaya invents when he wants to rationalize his inherited models, both within his own literary and theoretical ecology and in light of the disparate materials he is bringing together. When, for example, in his Bharatavṛddha passage, he substitutes his source's *sumanasah prekṣakāḥ* ('thoughtful spectators') with the practically identical but lexically distinct *sāmājikānām manasi* ('in the minds of the theatre-goers'), he is drawing into higher relief the emphases of the new cognitive poetics of the reception-oriented scholarship while providing it a would-be ancient pedigree. Besides smoothing over possible theoretical anachronisms, Śāradātanaya's inventions also provide scope for his own innovations, as in the same Bharatavṛddha passage, where he introduces the idea of the variability of the *rasa*-experience depending upon the mental state of the spectator. This problem in turn occasioned the digressions on the difference of the audience's subjective constitution later in the same chapter that he attributes to the spurious *Yogamālā* and the teachings of Vāsuki. The assignment of the doctrines of sentence-meaning to the *Kalpavallī* shares a similar logic: bringing together

so many disparate sources—and rewriting many of them in the process of composition—may have motivated Śāradātanaya to posit a single locus of attribution for the resulting work of bricolage.

“Lost or as Good as Lost”

The range of methods that Śāradātanaya adapted from the philological toolkit of the purāṇic and tantric authors thus enabled him to adopt a novel position-taking in the wider domain of the discourse on performance and literary language, a position that accorded with the intuitions of other authors active in the South in the wake of the new Kashmirian dispensation in poetics. But the resonance between the doctrines advanced in the *Bhāvaprakāśana* extended beyond the work of authors writing in Sanskrit. Again, it is the text's titular focus on *bhāva* that provides the most immediate point of connection. As we have seen, this focus—eccentric from the *rasa*-centered theoretical commitment of *alaṃkāra*- or *nāṭyaśāstra*—can be understood to be complementary with the Prābhākaras' holistic theory of sentence meaning. Yet the focus on *bhāva* finds a more profound correlation with the speculation on the emotional content of literary language as it had long been theorized by authors writing in Tamil. The rubric under which this is described there, that of *mēyppāṭu*, exists in a marginalized place in Tamil literary theory, especially so when contrasted with the theoretical scheme of the *akattiṇai* and *purattiṇai*, the celebrated and much-discussed poetics of love and war.⁵⁰ These latter have been understood by contemporary scholarship to be the authentic and indigenous Tamil contribution to criticism, while *mēyppāṭu*, though allotted an independent discussion in the *Tōlkāppiyam*, the classical authority on grammar and poetics, has tended to be dismissed as an interloper into Tamil poetic theory, an imported adaptation of Northern Sanskritic models.⁵¹ And there is in fact some

50 The classic English-language treatment of this is A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War: From the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Long Poems of Classical Tamil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 231–295.

51 Many of the references to the modern accounts of *mēyppāṭu* are surveyed in Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism*, 177–178. Takanobu Takahashi (*Tamil love poetry and poetics* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 23 ff.), while attributing the received text of the *Pōṟuḷatikāram* to a lengthy process of textual composition and expansion, places the *mēyppāṭu* and *uvamai* sections in the most recent fringe of the work. However, Takahashi notes that the *purattiṇaiyīyal* seems to be itself an addition to the basic text of the *Tōlkāppiyam*; its pronounced lack of a Sanskrit-derived lexis and its thematic independence from the bulk

truth to this: as was demonstrated decades ago by P.S. Subrahmanya Sastri, the *Tōlkāppiyam*'s account of *mēyppātu* is clearly indebted to the sixth and seventh *adhyāyas* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a discovery that has been reproduced in all subsequent scholarship on the subject, mostly without further examination.⁵² Any attempts to understand the status of *mēyppātu* have been further hampered by late medieval scholastic efforts to reconcile this one set of critical vocabulary with that of *akam* and *puṛam*, reducing *mēyppātu* to a watered-down and unsatisfying adjunct to the dominant theory.⁵³

In what little modern scholarship there is on *mēyppātu*, the term has tended to be understood to mean “occurring [-*pātu*] in the body [*mēy*-],” an interpretation that is somewhat warranted by premodern authorities.⁵⁴ Yet the word can with equal etymological plausibility and equal authority be taken to refer to the process of “making [-*pātu*] real [*mēy*-],” in a very precise calque of the causative valence of *bhāva* in Sanskrit (i.e. *bhāvayatīti bhāvaḥ*). This alternate etymological explanation accounts for a curious lacuna in the *Tōlkāppiyam*'s account: the complete absence of a lexical or conceptual analogue to the *rasas*. The term *cuvai*, which in later scholarly Tamil is the functional calque for *rasa*, strikingly occurs *nowhere* in the text of the *Tōlkāppiyam*.

of the text might suggest that it was an independent composition incorporated *en bloc* into the grammar.

- 52 See P.S. Subrahmanya Sastri, *History of grammatical theories in Tamil and their relation to the grammatical literature in Sanskrit* (Madras: Madras Law Journal Press, 1934); he also sustains this interpretation throughout his translation of this part of the *Tōlkāppiyam* (Subrahmanya Sastri, *Tōlkāppiyam, the earliest extant Tamil grammar [...] with a critical commentary in English. Porul-Atikāram—Tamil Poetics, Part III—Meyppāṭṭiyal, Uvamai iyal, Ceyyul iyal and Marappiyal* (Madras: The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 1956), 1–12). Of the scholarship I have reviewed, only Marr (*The eight anthologies: a study in early Tamil literature* (Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1985)) seems to represent an independent judgement on the subject.
- 53 This effort at rationalization reached its apogee in the Vaitṭiyanāta Tecikar's *Ilakkaṇa-ṇṇalakkam* (17th c.), and its legacy strongly colors, for instance, the recent survey of Indra Manuel (*Literary theories in Tamil* (Pondicherry: Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture, 1997)), whose synchronic view suppresses this centuries' long process of synthesis.
- 54 Notably by Pēruntevaṇār, the commentator on the *Viṛacoliyam* and supposedly the direct pupil of its author Puttamittiraṇār (thus active at some point close to the reign of the text's patron Vīraṇjendra Coḷa, ca. 1060–1068). Commenting on 3.5, and writing in verse and so possibly citing an earlier authority, Pēruntevaṇār states *mēyppāṭṭiyalvakai mēṭaka viṛippin / mēyṭkaṭ paṭṭu ṇṇalakkam torraṇ / cēvviṭil tērintu cēppal marṇ' ative*, “To expand upon the variety of *mēyppātu*: it is the manifestation that appears in the body, as well as the verbal expression [of it], when ill-health becomes apparent”.

For the scholiast Ḥampūraṇar, whose commentary on the *Tōlkāppiyam*'s section on poetics is the earliest to survive, this lack needed to be made good. To do so, he relied throughout his exegesis of the *Mēyppāṭṭiyal* (the *Tōlkāppiyam*'s 'section on *mēyppāṭu*') on the authority of a work called the *Cēyirriyam*. This was a text evidently entirely on the drama, which is now only known through quotations, mostly though not exclusively those of Ḥampūraṇar himself. Although the *Tōlkāppiyam* commentator only cites a series of short passages from this text, it is possible to gather something of its own understanding of *mēyppāṭu*—for which it supports the 'causal' etymology proposed above—and of *mēyppāṭu*'s relationship to *cuvai*, which Ḥampūraṇar imports into his own interpretation of his root-text. It is this transference of theoretical energy that allows for a wider perspective on Śāradātanaya's project in the *Bhāvaprakāśana*. Though the *Cēyirriyam* was written in evident imitation of the *Tōlkāppiyam*, it is possible to detect in it the influence of the *Abhinavabhārati* of Abhinavagupta, especially in its peculiar explanation of the status of *naṭuvu-nilaimai*, its equivalent to the much-debated *śāntarasa*.⁵⁵ At a basic, source-critical level, this enables us to see just how quickly the doctrines associated with the Kashmirian not only transmitted to the far South, but were taken up by the literary avant-garde working in the vernacular: adopting the late-eleventh century date assigned to Ḥampūraṇar by some scholars—or even pushing him back decades later—the sequence Abhinava-Cēyirriyaṇār-Ḥampūraṇar supplies a rough chronological framework to track this process.⁵⁶ This in turn supplies vital background to our understanding of the outstanding influence of the literary theory of Abhinavagupta and other Kashmirian and north-

55 For an extended demonstration of this, see Cox, "From Source-criticism to Intellectual History in the Poetics of the Medieval Tamil Country," in *Bilingual Discourse and Cross-Cultural Fertilisation: Sanskrit and Tamil in Mediaeval India*, ed. Whitney Cox and Vincenzo Vergiani (Pondicherry: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2013), 124–129; for further evidence of Ḥampūraṇar's dependence on the *Cēyirriyam*, see Cox, "From Source-criticism," 132–135.

56 Aruṇācalam (*Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāru* (Chennai: The Parker, 2004) v. 4, 179–181) provides Ḥampūraṇar with the very precise *floruit* of 1070–1095, based on slender evidence. He adduces citations by Aṭiyārkkunallar (possibly 12th c), Pavaṇanti, Cenāvaraiyar (both 13th c), and Nacciṇārkkiniyar (14th c) to supply his upper limit, while Ḥampūraṇar's seeming awareness of the *Yāpparunkala virutti* (early 11th c) and his use in a discussion of the noun *paraṇi*, provide the lower limit, provided that we understand this, as Aruṇācalam very optimistically does, to signal an awareness of the lost *Kūṭalcaṅkattupparaṇi* honoring Vīraṇjendraçola (r. 1063–1070). Kamil Zvelebil (*Lexicon of Tamil literature. Handbuch der Orientalistik* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 248) reproduces Varatarācaṇ's conclusions.

ern authors when Śāradātanaya set about composing his own account a few generations later.

In the little testimony that survives of the *Cēyirriyam*, we are privy to a manner of text-making similar to the pseudonymous style of the purāṇic and tantric authors adopted by Śāradātanaya. The Tamil dramaturgical text was composed in an archaizing register of Tamil largely eschewing any Sanskrit-derived lexis and was cast in the *nūrpā* ('sūtra-meter') verse form, an adaptation of the 'classical' *akaval* meter. In this, once again, it adhered to the formal features of the prestigious model of the *Tōlkāppiyam*. The text was assigned to an eponymous author, Cēyirriyanār, whose own authorial judgements are backstopped by reference to unnamed authorities, as in the frequently repeated cliché *ēnpa* ('so they say'). Again, both of these features are evidently drawn from the model of the ancient grammar. So in contrast to the mythical author-figures familiar from the new texts in Sanskrit, the Tamil work adopts a model from the distant but nevertheless human past, in accord with the evocation of the time of the three Tamil *caṅkams*, a commonplace in medieval literary thought. But the distinction should not be overdrawn: Nakkīraṇār, the earliest source for this quasi-historicist imagination of Tamil's glorious classical past, did so in the course of the introduction to his commentary on a work ascribed to Śiva.

It was in Śāradātanaya's lifetime that the sort of proliferation of new authorities like the *Cēyirriyam* began to meet with the dogged resistance of an assertive classicism, a reaction that may well have hastened that work's eventual loss. As Jennifer Clare has documented, the early-thirteenth century *Tōlkāppiyam* commentator Perācīriyar adopted an uncompromisingly rigid adherence to literary tradition (*marapu*) centered exclusively on the *Tōlkāppiyam* and a defined canon of classical texts, as opposed to the innovations of more recent scholarship. Perācīriyar sought, in Clare's words, to distinguish

between the Caṅkam era and his own (debased) time, identifying texts produced during the Caṅkam period as "poetry of excellent people" (*cāṇrōr ceyyuḷ*) in contrast to the work of "scholars of today" (*ikkālattār*), "later scholars" (*pīrkālattār*) who are "ignorant of poetry" (*ceyyuḷ ariyātār*) ... He also identifie[d] specific threats to the old tradition, such as the introduction of new genres not found in the early grammar, stating that "if a scholar creates genres according to his own interest, or according to the rules of people with other languages, this is not the tradition for creating Tamil literature."⁵⁷

57 Jennifer Steele Clare, "Canons, Conventions, and Creativity: Defining Literary Tradition in

But even Perācīriyar's *ad fontes* vendetta operated within a set of presumptions that tacitly linked him with the inventively spurious philology of Śāradātanaya: the Tamil scholiast's final court of appeal for his own arguments rested on the authority of the mythical grammar attributed to the sage Agastya as the author of a purely mythical *mutaṇṭūl* or "primary treatise," in consonance with which he claimed to write.⁵⁸

But perhaps the most telling connection between Śāradātanaya and the work of savants writing in Tamil could be found in Aṭiyārkkunallār's mammoth commentary on the epic *Cilappatikāram*. Like Perācīriyar, Aṭiyārkkunallār flourished very close to Śāradātanaya's lifetime, perhaps in the closing decades of the twelfth century. And like the Sanskrit author, much of his technical scholarly interest lay in questions of dance and music. These interests made sense for a student of Iḷaṅkovaṭikal's long poem, which includes long passages of minutely detailed observation on performance. The commentary, which easily ranks among the greatest works of early Tamil philology, begins on a poignant note, with Aṭiyārkkunallār surveying the wreckage of an earlier world of scholarship:

Now, texts on musical Tamil such as the *Pērunārai-Pēruṅkuruku*,⁵⁹ and other old texts such as the *Pañcapāratiyam* composed by the divine sage Nārada have all been lost. The old texts on dramatic Tamil, such as the *Paratam* and the *Akattiyaṁ*, have also been lost. Moreover, the limited extent of those isolated *sūtras* found in works such as the *Muruval*, the *Cayanta[nūl]*, the *Kuṇanūl* or the *Cēyirriyam*—or the fact that they are missing their beginning, middle, or end—makes them as good as lost. And as these are lost, so too are other things, like the *pēruṅkalam*.⁶⁰

Premodern Tamil South India." (Ph.D dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2010), 16–17. The corpus of literary works acceptable to Perācīriyar extended slightly beyond the domain of the eight anthologies and ten long songs now understood to be exhaustive of 'Caṅkam literature': he allowed for the inclusion of the *Cilappatikāram* and of the ethical works of the *Patinēṅkiḷkaṇakku*: Clare, "Canons, Conventions, and Creativity," 16.

58 Clare, "Canons, Conventions, and Creativity," 19.

59 The typography of Cāminātaiyar's editions, as well as separate entries given to these items in the *Madras Tamil Lexicon* (both only citing this passage) suggest that these are separate works. I understand this to be a single, hyphenated title, both being names of birds, though the referent of each seems to shift over time (*nārai*, "pelican, crane, stork, heron"; *kuruku*, "heron, stork, crane, wild fowl, *krauṇca*").

60 *Cilappatikāram* ['*Uraippāyiram*'], 9–10: *ini icaittamiṇṭūlākiya pērunārai pēruṅkurukum pīravum tevaviruṭi nāraṇ cēya pañcapāratiya mutalā uḷḷa tōṇṇūlkaḷ irantaṇa. nāṭakat-*

As he then proceeds to demonstrate, the *pēruṅkalam* is exemplary of the real interpretative challenges he faced as a commentator on the *Cilappatikāram*. For while he tells his readers that the extant treatises permit us to know that a *pēruṅkalam* was a certain kind of large *yāl* or lute, they differ in their basic details of the instrument, things like its size, number of strings, *et cetera*. It is only through some careful textual detective work on his part—drawing on lexicography and a stray reference in the *Pēruṅkatai* of Koṅkuvelir—that he was able to establish that the instrument was in fact a thousand-stringed lute (that this seems unlikely, or at the very least unwieldy, does not blunt his commentarial zeal). And it is the search for this sort of detail that lends Aṭiyārkkunallār's commentary its unique flavor, in its practice of a *Sachphilologie* otherwise rarely attempted in early India.

But the commentator's focus on the realia of the world of the *Cilappatikāram* illustrates the limits of his knowledge. This is evident in the epic's third long canto, the *araṅkerrukātai* on Mātavi's début as a dancer and her seduction of the poem's male protagonist Kovalan. Here, Aṭiyārkkunallār draws on every authority available to him, including the *Cēyirriyam* and the other works he discusses in his proem. In one of these, the *Kuṇanūl* ('The Treatise on the *guṇas*'), we can see a direct Tamil precedent to some of Śāradātanaya's metaphysical speculations; Aṭiyārkkunallār quotes from this work in explaining the "two types of drama" (*iru vakaik kūttinūm*) mentioned in the canto's twelfth line. One of his several explanations hints at a prefiguration of several of the themes developed in the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s purāṇic Sanskrit account. Like Perācīriyar, he recruits the supernatural authority of Agastya to his explanation; filling out the typology of an unattributed work (which resembled the *Cēyirriyam* in style) he invoked the testimony of the *Kuṇanūl* to the effect that the mental flavors (*akaccuvai*, where *cuvai* = *rasa*) that result from dance are speciated as *irācatam*, *tāmatam*, and *cāttuvikam*, that is, as derivatives of the Sāṃkhya *guṇas* *rājasa*, *tāmasa*, and *sāttvika*; a parallel explanation draws from the *Cayantanūl*, which to judge by its title may have presented itself as the teachings of demigod Jayanta, the son of Indra.⁶¹

tamiṇṇūlākiya paratam akattiyam mutalākavulla tōṇṇūlkaḷum irantaṇa. piṇṇum muṇuval cayantam kuṇanūl cēyirriyam eṇpaṇarūḷḷum ōrucār cūttiraiṇkaḷ naṭakkirṇa attuṇaiy allatu mutal naṭu iruti kāṇāmaiṇ avaiyūm irantaṇa polum. irakkave varum, pēruṅkala mutaliya pīravum ām. I have greatly benefitted from Aruṇācalam's fine discussion of these and other sources cited by Aṭiyārkkunallār (*Tamiḷ ilakkiya varalāru*, vol. 6, 16–27).

- 61 *Cilappatikāram*, 80: *ṇṇu iruvakaikkūttāvaṇa cāntiyum, vinotamum. eṇṇai?* 'avaṇi *tām cāntikkūttum vinotakkūttum eṇṇāyṇt'ura vakuttaṇaṇ akattiyaṇ rāne' eṇṇār ākalīṇ.* "Now, as for the 'two types of dance': these are *cānti* [i.e. Skt. *śānti*, 'beatific'] and *vinotam* [i.e. Skt. *vin-*

As tantalizing as these connections with Śāradātanaya's theories are, Aṭiyārkkunallār's attempts at interpreting the *Cilappatikāram*'s representations of music and dance reveal something more profound about the Sanskrit author's decision to frame his work as he did. For time and again in this long *kātai*, when the scholiast is faced with some technical term or detail in Ilaṅko's text, even the most charitable of readers can see that he is often at sea, forced to come up with stopgap explanations or to awkwardly fit these into the anachronistic typologies of the materials available to him. His exegeses are sometimes compelling, but often they fail to convince: as with the *pēruṅkalam*, he appears to be making what he can with what he has. Aṭiyārkkunallār's opening apologia on the poverty of his sources should thus not be read as conventional mock-humility, but as a sincere and no doubt frustrated admission of real limitations. Unlike Śāradātanaya, he does not concoct new texts to patch up his own inventions. Yet the fact that they were so close in place and time, and that their imaginal universes seem so close to one another suggests that it would be a crucial mistake to draw too stark a divide between the two men, taking one as a disingenuous fabulist and the other the sort of hard working scholar who would inspire our admiration today. Śāradātanaya's *Bhāvaprakāśana* was a response to the same material and intellectual pressures as Aṭiyārkkunallār's *urai*: the problems of lost or incomplete texts admitted by the one supplied the conditions of possibility for the other's creations. A world where a dedicated source-hunter could long for a copy of Nārada's *Pañcapāratiyam* was a world eager to be shown a precious scrap of Bharatavṛddha or one of Mammaṭa's heretofore unknown sources. Real texts could go missing and be supplanted by recent replacements, and it would only take a generation or so before none would

oda, '[for] enjoyment']. Why is this? Because, as they say, 'After careful study, Akattiyaṇ himself has divided these up into *cānti*-dance and *vinota*-dance.'" I am not in a position to advance further speculation about the status of *cānti* here and its possible relationship with the question of *śāntarasa*. An aside on the status of bodily dance-movements (*mēykūttu*) mentioned in his unnamed source leads Aṭiyārkkunallār to discuss the nature of affective response: *akaccuvaivāvaṇa irācatam tāmatam cāttuvikam eṇpaṇa*. '*kuṇattiṇ valiyat' akakkūtt' eṇappaṭume' eṇṇār kuṇanūluṭaiyār; akattēlu cuvaivāṇ akam eṇappaṭume' eṇṇār cayantanūluṭaiyārum*'. "As for the 'mental flavors', there are grounded [respectively] in *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*. Those who hold to the doctrine of the *Kuṇanūl* have said, 'It is called *akam* ('inner') dance as it follows the path of the *guṇas*'; on the other hand, those who hold to the doctrine of the *Cayantanūl* have said 'Because the *rasa* occurs in the mind [*akam*], it is called 'inner'.'" This same passage in the *Cilappatikāram* refers to Jayanta's place in the Tamil imaginaire as the progenitor of dance: 3:1–4 describes how a curse cast by Agastya onto Jayanta (*intira ciṛuvaṇ*) results in the introduction of dramatic arts into the Tamil country, and so into the heroine Mātavi's family.

be the wiser: in circumstances such as these, such defensive canon-policing as Perācīriyar's makes perfect sense. Aṭiyārkunallar's philology of necessity thus served at least as the midwife, if not the mother, to Śāradātanaya's philological inventions.

Veṅkaṭanātha and the Limits of Philological Argument

By the end of the thirteenth century, a Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava reader would have had available to him a library of works unknown in his great-grandfather's time. For many of these works' presumed readers—Brahman men, comfortable in their lives lived out in the otiose leisure of the *agrahāra* or in the precincts of a temple—this no doubt summoned an experience of deep cultured contentment. Here, after all, were the teachings of gods, goddesses, and sages, neatly laid out and readily available for our inspection, on questions ranging from the fate of the embodied soul to the proper way to conduct the meticulous details of everyday life. It is from these self-satisfied ranks that the authors of the pseudepigrapha likely emerged, adding a detail here or a learned borrowing there, secure in their modicum of divine inspiration. It was also from among these ranks, I have suggested, that Śāradātanaya likely emerged: more ambitious than those of his confreres who were content to add to or reimagine the stock of tantric and purāṇic texts, in the *Bhāvaprakāśana* he grafted his own perspectival articulation of literary theory and dramaturgical instruction onto the pseudepigrapha's open and receptive frame. For other men learned in the *śāstras*, however, the experience of the newly transformed textual landscape was likely to have been one of Borgesian vertigo, at once thrilling and troubling. It was these figures who were compelled to write books of their own about their textual inheritance, and to whom I will devote the next two chapters.

The first of these was the great Veṅkaṭanātha, better known by his honorific title Vedāntadeśika ('teacher of the Vedānta') and traditionally said to have lived 1268–1369 CE. It is with real humility that one has to approach the enormous body of work attributed to Veṅkaṭanātha, which includes more than a hundred works composed in the highest registers of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Tamil and the hybrid Vaiṣṇava idiolect of Maṇipravāḷam, and masterfully bestriding a plethora of scholarly and literary genres, from classical poetry and dialectics to devotional lyrics and sermonizing commentaries. His successors in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition recognized him as a figure of real genius, indeed of divine provenance. Despite the often bitter intramural arguments that divide members of that religion, Veṅkaṭanātha is universally esteemed and worshipped as its foremost figure after its founder Rāmānuja; he is said to be the earthly incar-

nation of the bell that attends Viṣṇu in his heaven of Vaikuṇṭha. Even today he is invoked as *kavitārkkakesarin*, “The Lion among poets and philosophers”. To this, I would add another, unheralded field of expertise: Veṅkaṭanātha was also an innovative, even a revolutionary, textual scholar in practice and the promulgator of a remarkable theory of philological reading.

Some years ago, Roque Mesquita pointed out that in his *Śatadūṣaṇī* or *Hundred Refutations*, Veṅkaṭanātha turned the intimidating powers of his intellect on to some of the purāṇic sources cited by certain unnamed contemporaries, claiming these supposed authorities to be surreptitious interpolations that did not have wide acceptance.¹ Mesquita saw in this a reference to Madhva, Veṅkaṭanātha’s Vaiṣṇava correlative and the founder of a new religious movement in what is now Karnataka. The identification is not certain: Veṅkaṭanātha only speaks of *pāpiṣṭhāḥ*, ‘terrible sinners,’ as the object of his polemic. While Madhva and his followers may have been especially flagrant in this—and, as Mesquita demonstrates, had the chutzpah to offer a whole theory of textuality in the service of their interpolations—but they were far from alone in so doing. Veṅkaṭanātha was in fact bringing up the elephant in the room of contemporaneous sectarian controversy: that whole new textual corpora had been introduced and placed within a canon of existing authorities, and that this was the work of interested human authors, not the gods or their supernatural deputies.

That the Śrīvaiṣṇava was well aware of this, and that he was able to turn his critical gaze to objects nearer at hand, can be seen in the opening chapter of his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, or *Amulet for the Pāñcarātra*.² This is a remarkable

1 *Śatadūṣaṇī*, 65: *yāni cānyāni vākyaṇi saṃpratipannaśrutismṛtiṣv adṛśyamānāni svācārānurūpamataparicaryayā keṣucid aprasiddheṣu vā naṣṭakoṣeṣu vānirūpitamūlāgreṣu vā purāṇeṣu prakṣīpya paṭhanti pāpiṣṭhāḥ, tāni pratyakṣaśrutyādipariśilanaśāliniṣu gariṣṭhagoṣṭhiṣu nāvākāṣaṇi labhante*. Mesquita’s translation: “There are other passages that are not found in acknowledged Vedas and smṛtis. Sinful people, because of their devotion to opinions that accord with their conduct, first interpolate them and then claim to find them in some Purāṇas that are not well known, or whose collections are lost or whose beginnings and ends are not determined. These passages are not admitted in venerable assemblies distinguished for their meticulous study of express Vedic and other authoritative texts [or rather ‘by their careful cultivation of valid sources of knowledge, such as direct evidence and authoritative textual warrant’ -wmc].” (Roque Mesquita, *Madhva’s unknown literary sources: some observations* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000), 27–28).

2 Note that this title gives the name Pāñcarātra, with a long first vowel. Though this is the title given in the two editions of the text I refer to here, and is the usual term in modern scholarship, it does not seem to be the title used by Veṅkaṭanātha himself, nor by other early authors. I give the title as published for convenience’s sake.

scholarly essay in Sanskrit prose, the beginning of which is devoted to establishing the overall legitimacy and authority of the Pañcarātra scriptures. This was not the first such effort: the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (“On the Validity of Scripture”) of Yāmunaśāstra (writing two generations before Rāmānuja, and so traditionally dated to the early eleventh century), presented a classic case in defense of the Vaiṣṇava tantric corpus. Veṅkaṭanātha proudly announces his filiation to this earlier text when, in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*’s opening pages, he reproduces word for word Yāmuna’s own closing arguments. But the difference in scholarly method between the two works is profound: while Yāmuna’s text is a bravura display of dialectical logic, drawing heavily on the intellectual resources of Nyāya, Veṅkaṭanātha’s text is concerned with a rational enquiry into the internal coherence of the Pañcarātra scriptures’ own organizing logic. In the transition from one method to the other, we can trace here—to borrow the Senecan title of Elman’s study of early modern China—a move from philosophy to philology.³

Snakes versus Eagles

The influence of Yāmuna’s treatise extends beyond this quotation. For readers attentive to this predecessor-text, this can best be seen in the stunning piece of verbal artistry which opens the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*. The third and final of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*’s invocatory verses presents a remarkable example of Veṅkaṭanātha’s poetry, at once characteristically oblique and dizzying in its suggested undercurrents:

*ārohan tv anavadyatarkapadavīśīmādrśāṃ mādṛśāṃ
pakṣe kṛtāyuge niveśitapadāḥ pakṣe patadbhyaḥ parān |
sarvānuśravaśāradarśiśāraḥkampadvijihvāśana-
krīḍākunḍalimaularatnaghṛṇibhiḥ sārātrikāḥ sūktayaḥ ||*

May the eloquent teachings—their words set in place long ago, in the early years of the Age of Perfection—overwhelm the opponents of those who adhere to a position of men such as myself, we who have seen the outlines of the faultless path of reason,

3 Benjamin Elman. *From Philosophy to Philology: Social and Intellectual Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1990).

as the rays from the crest-jewels of serpents, toyed with by eagles who dine upon their forked-tongued kind and shake their head in astonishment at those who see into the essence of the entire Veda, provide waving lamps to accompany their recitation.

Veṅkaṭanātha's poetic writing possesses a power that is difficult to capture in translation, what Bronner and Shulman have attractively described as its 'depth', the way in which Veṅkaṭanātha could "condense within the space of a single work—even a single verse—an entire world of specific associations, contents, and meanings."⁴ Certainly this remarkable compression is in evidence here, ranging over a densely interconnected network of intertexts, mythic references and recondite allusions. First of all, there is the intertext: Veṅkaṭanātha directly echoes the *Āgamaprāmāṇya*'s final verse; though this is identical in metrical form and many points of phrasing, the overall effect is strikingly different:⁵

*ākalpaṃ vilasantu sātvatamataprasparddhiduṣpaddhati-
vyāmugdhoddhatadurvidagdhapariṣadvaidagdhyaividhvaṃsinaḥ |
śrīmannāthamunīndravarddhitadhiyo nirdhūtaviśvāśivāḥ
santaḥ santatagadyapadyapadavīhṛdyānavadyoktayaḥ ||*

Laying waste to the clever arguments of the arrogant, ill-bred assemblies who are utterly deluded by their false path of opposition to the Sātvata doctrine; their minds opened by the revered Nāthamuni, they have cast off all the evils of the world; with their constant stream of faultless teachings, charmingly crafted in prose and verse both:

May those good people flourish until the end of the cosmic age.

For a reader alive to the nuance of this reference, the implicit statement is remarkably bold. Just as in the direct quotation of Yāmuna's text a few pages later, this opening gambit not only links Veṅkaṭanātha's work with a classic authority of his tradition, it openly declares itself to be an advance upon it, extending further the points seemingly settled centuries before. Veṅkaṭanātha

4 Yigal Bronner and David Shulman, trans., *Poems and Prayers from South India* (New York: JLC Foundation 2009), 9 *et passim*.

5 *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, 171.

wants his readers to know that his own defense of the coherence of the Pāñcarātra goes well beyond Yāmuna's.

Paradoxically, but fully in keeping with Veṅkaṭanātha's wider literary aesthetics, this extension into the present takes the form of a look into the deep past.⁶ This is sensitively keyed as a response to its textual precursor; for all that it invokes the living memory of Yāmuna's paternal grandfather Nāthamuni, the *Āgamaprāmāṇya*'s final verse is a muscular declaration to the future, signaled by its opening words *ākālpam vilasantu* "may they flourish until the end of the cosmic age". In studied contrast, Veṅkaṭanātha's verse plunges its reader back into the primordial past, *pakṣe kṛtayuge* ("in the [first] half of the Kṛtayuga," the first and most perfect of the world's four eras), when the 'eloquent teachings' (*sūktayaḥ*), took on their present form. Unspecified, these are clearly meant to refer to the Pāñcarātra *tantras*; they echo Yāmuna's *anavadyoktayaḥ* ('faultless teachings'), which fall at an identical place at the end of the verse. The basic structure of Veṅkaṭanātha's invocation thus embodies an opening argument, at once asserting the antiquity of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures as a mark of their *prima facie* validity and framing his efforts in terms of his predecessor's own poetic reasoning.

Things then take a vertiginous turn. Once again, comparison with Yāmuna is instructive. The earlier philosopher unleashes a broadside against those who would doubt the truth of his religion; Veṅkaṭanātha the poet-philologist (/philosopher-theologian-preacher-polemicist...) adopts a different course. The eagles and serpents—proverbial enemies in Indic literature—found in the translation are not explicitly present in the Sanskrit text. Instead, in a bravura display of allusive suggestion, they are summoned up for the reader through periphrasis: in the long compound that fills most of the verse's second half, the totemic Vaiṣṇava bird is called *dvijihvāśana* "whose food is the forked-tongue one"; its adversary—already elliptically present in the eagle's identifying kenning—is picked out later in the same compound as *kuṇḍalin*, the 'curved one.' The image is itself an atypical and playful one: as they listen to the Pāñcarātrika *āgamas*, the eagles shake their heads in approval and wonder at how their doctrine so perfectly accords with the Veda, like connoisseurs in a concert-hall. As they do this, they worry the prey that dangles from their

6 Cf. Bronner and Shulman, *Poems and Prayers*, esp. 10–16, 18–22 on the temporal 'loops' built into the structure of the *Haṃsasandeśa*. See here also these authors' translation of the text (*Poems and Prayers*, 3–80) and Steve Hopkins, "Sanskrit in a Tamil Imaginary: *Sandeśakāvya* and the *Haṃsasandeśa* of Veṅkaṭanātha," in *Passages: Relationships between Tamil and Sanskrit*, ed. M. Kannan and Jennifer Clare (Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie/École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009).

beaks, which are serpents crested—as they are habitually imagined to be—by inset gems. As light scatters from these gems—and as the eagles continue to play with their food⁷—this stands in place of the lamp waving (*ārātrika*) that is a standard part of the ritual repertoire of temple worship. That is to say, this densely imagined verse calls to mind a typical scene to be found in a Vaiṣṇava temple, precisely the social space that the *tantras*, whose authority the work will labor to defend, seek to regulate.

Veṅkaṭanātha's play of implication does not end there. The verse turns on the wish that the Pāñcarātra teachings might, in an unusual turn of phrase, “overwhelm” (*ārohanu*, literally “mount upon”) those opposed (*parān*, often ‘enemies’) to the proponents of the author's own position (*mādrśam ... pakṣe patadbhyaḥ*), reworking the standard idiom of *pakṣapāta* “partisan, adopting one side of an argument”.⁸ His periphrasis of this idiom, however, itself suggests “those flying [*patadbhyaḥ*] on the wing [*pakṣe*],” and so—in light of what follows—there is once again a suggestion of birds and of their *paras*, the serpents. The identification is, as it were, transitive (the figure of speech in question may thus be *pariṇāma*, the metaphorical ‘transformation’ of the subject of comparison⁹): the opponents of Veṅkaṭanātha's views are retrospectively seen as snakes, whose attribute “forked-tongued” possesses the same nuances

7 As Gary Tubb—to whom I am very grateful for an enlightening discussion of this verse—suggests, the phrase *saśiraḥkampa* (‘with their heads shaking,’ i.e. in approval) in the context of an invocation bears further suggested significance: as Ingalls has noted (Ingalls, *An anthology of Sanskrit court poetry*, 466 and esp. 475) derivatives of the verbal root *√kamp* (‘to shake’) further suggest *anukampā*, ‘compassion,’ one of the principle modes of describing a deity's relationship with the created world. The eagles, who themselves call to mind Garuḍa (‘The Eagle’), Viṣṇu's cosmic mount, are thus at once aggressive and gracious in their actions.

8 As a model here, Veṅkaṭanātha may have had in mind Śrīharṣa's *Naiṣadhīya* 2.52 (again, I am indebted to Tubb for this suggestion): *na suvarṇamayī tanu param nanu vāg api tāvaki tathā | na param pathi pakṣapātītānavalambe kimu mādrśe ‘pi sā ||* in which Nala addresses the golden goose: “It is not just your body that is made of gold [*suvarṇa*], but your words also have a lovely sound [*suvarṇa*]. So too you do not just fly by wing [*pakṣapātītā*] in the unsupported path [of the sky], you are also a partisan [*pakṣapātītā*] for the likes of me, who has no other recourse.” The *Pāñcarātrarakṣā's* *pakṣe patadbhyaḥ parān*, with its ablative construing with the final noun, rather than a genitive, is a little unusual, and may have been motivated purely by the exigencies of the meter. It may, however, been deliberately chosen to suggest “those other than” instead of “enemies of,” especially given that Veṅkaṭanātha's opponents here are, as we shall see, his coreligionists.

9 As defined in Ruyyaka's *Alaṅkārasarvasva*, sūtra 16 *āropyamāṇasya prakṛtopayogitve pariṇāmaḥ*, “When the standard of comparison—the thing that is being superimposed—is applied to the immediate context, the figure is *pariṇāma*, metaphorical transformation.”

in Sanskrit as it does in English. But once again in strong (if subtle!) contrast to Yāmuna, whose intellectual adversaries were hostile to the very existence of the Pāñcarātra as a legitimate religion, it seems that Veṅkaṭanātha's forked-tongued opponents may have lain closer at hand.

The *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*'s relationship to the logical-epistemological tradition embodied by Yāmuna's work is further alluded to in its opening prose sentence, which immediately follows this final invocatory verse:

First of all, the absolutely regnant validity of the teachings of the Blessed Viṣṇu has been argued for in works such as the *Mahābhārata*, by such figures as Vyāsa, men who have themselves directly perceived the actual state of reality, as it is conveyed in all of the Vedic revelation.¹⁰

The appeal here is again to the *prima facie* authority of the Pāñcarātra, here based on the testimony of mythic luminaries like Vyāsa, whose own reliability depends upon a concatenation of the *pramāṇas*, or kinds of valid knowledge accepted by orthodox philosophy. Their understanding is founded, Veṅkaṭanātha tells us, on the fact that they have directly perceived (*pratyakṣita*, from *pratyakṣa* or 'perception') reality as it congrues with the truths of revelation (thus invoking *śabda* or *āgama*, 'authoritative testimony'). Their trustworthiness thus enables a further inference (or *anumāna*, the third member of the set of widely admitted *pramāṇas*) buttressing the authority of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Here we have the classical terms of Nyāya epistemology, turned towards an exclusively textual object, in a neatly sketched shorthand that casts a retrospective glance at Yāmuna's lengthy logical proof.

Rite and Contamination

For all of its linguistic and scholarly brilliance, the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* was not the only such effort to rationally approach the question of the Pāñcarātra canon. We have already briefly touched upon one effort by an anonymous coreligionist of Veṅkaṭanātha's to organize his scriptural canon and to situate it in space, in the interpolation found in the opening of the Pāñcarātra *Jayākhyasamhitā*. This passage evidently took its final shape at some point close to Veṅkaṭanātha's

10 *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* [hereafter *Rakṣā*], 2: *atra tāvat pratyakṣitasamastavedārthatattvasthitibhiḥ pārāśaryaprabhṛtibhiḥ mahābhāratādiṣu bhagavacchāstrasya sārvaḥmaṇyaṁ prāmāṇyaṁ pratyapādi*.

own lifetime, judging from the architectural details it presumes about the Varadarājasvāmin temple in Kāñcīpuram, near to the Śrīvaiṣṇava polymath's natal village.¹¹ This effort, however, was one of several, and despite its wide currency in modern secondary scholarship, the *Jayākhyā*'s notion of the *ratnatraya* seems largely to have been limited to the text itself (though Veṅkaṭanātha, notably, is aware of it).¹² Evidently the most relevant, from Veṅkaṭanātha's perspective, was the organization of the Pāñcarātra religion as a whole into hierarchically ranked *siddhāntas* or 'rites'.¹³ Like the Veda, he writes (3), these are four in number, each divided, as the Veda is into *śākhās*, into numerous *tantras*: the *āgamasiddhānta*, the *mantrasiddhānta*, the *tantrasiddhānta*, and the *tantrāntarasiddhānta*. This system provided precisely yet another of the philological, bibliographic schemes that we have seen were operative in the new scriptural corpora of the South.

Unlike the anonymous *tantra* author-compilers, Veṅkaṭanātha set himself the task of rationalizing the often discordant statements of the system of the *siddhāntas*, as it had earlier been presented in works composed in different times and places and for distinct audiences. There was a real urgency to this need for rationalization, owing to a second presumption built into the system. The system of the *siddhāntas* and of their component *tantras* was premised

11 See references in pg. 42, fn. 34, above.

12 On this point, and on the scriptural history of the four *siddhāntas* discussed in this and the following paragraphs, I rely on the excellent discussion in an unpublished essay by Robert Leach, "The Three Jewels and the Formation of the Pāñcarātra Canon". As Leach notes, Veṅkaṭanātha refers in passing to the Three Jewels in a way that congrues with the *Jayākhyā*'s presentation (*Rakṣā*, 47: *ratnatrayam iti prasiddheṣu jayākhyasāttvata-pauṣkareṣu*, "... among those texts widely known as the 'three jewels,' that is the *Jayākhyā*, the *Sāttvata*, and the *Pauṣkara* ..."). However, Veṅkaṭanātha does so not in the context of the discussion of scriptural authenticity, but instead in the introduction to his presentation of the five daily observances that are incumbent on all Pāñcarātrika initiates, where he proceeds to quote *Jayākhyā* 22.64cd–81ab. Pointing to Veṅkaṭanātha's early life in the environs of Kāñcī, Leach suggests ("The three jewels") that "it might not be wholly implausible" that the *ratnatraya* idea was Veṅkaṭanātha's own innovation that was subsequently incorporated in the *Jayākhyā*'s opening. I find this unlikely; perhaps Veṅkaṭanātha was aware of an earlier version of the *adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ* interpolation, or both texts may be drawing on another authority.

13 Neither Leach, Rastelli, nor any of the scholarship they draw upon has offered a translation for this Pāñcarātra-specific usage of *siddhānta* (which usually connotes an 'authoritative conclusion' in śāstric argument, though cf. the Śaivasiddhānta, the 'authoritative [or orthodox] religion of Śiva'). I propose the English equivalent 'rite' on analogy with the Christian Latin rite or Byzantine rite.

on the avoidance of *saṃkara* or ‘mixture’. The practice of an individual temple or household could, it was presumed, only be performed according to the rule of a single *siddhānta* and following the ordinances of a single *tantra*: to do otherwise is, in the language of the sources Veṅkaṭanātha draws upon throughout, to invite disaster. The appeal to the avoidance of *saṃkara* was thus a powerful tool for the bibliographic organization of the *siddhāntas*—a sort of scriptural firewall—that possessed palpable consequences in the social life of their adherents. Veṅkaṭanātha’s principle authority for his presentation of this doctrine is the *Pādmasaṃhitā*, which he cites extensively (10–16), giving in effect a running commentary on long quotations of the text. This is the same text, as we have seen, that the composers of the *adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ* interpolation link to the *Jayākhyā*, as a commentary is connected to its root-text. However, for the *Jayākhyā* interpolators, who were likely near-contemporaries of Veṅkaṭanātha’s, the risk of *saṃkara* could be dismissed by fiat: as he instructs Brahmā in the liturgy he is instituting, that text has Viṣṇu simply declare that the priests in Kāñcīpuram “should always worship me according to the *Jayākhyā* accompanied by the *Pādma tantra*. As these form a root-text and commentary, there is in this case no problem of scriptural mixture between these two *tantras*.”¹⁴ Veṅkaṭanātha, writing in his own voice and not that of his deity, could not resort to such arguments from authority. While he thus shares his anonymous coreligionists’ rationalizing philological project, Veṅkaṭanātha is led to employ substantially different methods.

Veṅkaṭanātha signals his awareness of this problem in the opening of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* when he writes (4): *asaṃkīrṇā ceyaṃ vyavasthā pramāṇasaḥkṛtapāraṃparyaparyālocanayā vyavasthāpyā*, “And it is this arrangement [of the *siddhāntas*] in its unmixed state that itself needs to be arranged, through a critical investigation of the textual tradition.” This serves as a statement of purpose for the entirety of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*’s opening chapter, adumbrating Veṅkaṭanātha’s major contribution to the practice of scriptural philology. Set against the background of the work of bricolage and bibliographic synthesis that was the hallmark of the *tantra* and *purāṇa* composers, we can discern continuity at the level of terminology, but genuine innovation at the level of method. Veṅkaṭanātha preserves the bibliographic scaffolding of the system of the *siddhāntas* and the need to avoid their contamination, but takes this as the warrant for a completely different sort of scholarly project than can be seen

14 *Jayākhyā, adhikaḥ pāṭhaḥ*, vv. 111cd–112: *jayākhyenātha pādmēna tantreṇa sahiteṇa vai | mūlavayākhyānarūpābhyāṃ samaracayatu mām sadā | na tantrasaṅkaro doṣas tantrayor anayor iha ||*

in the *ex cathedra* prohibitions of the scriptural texts themselves. In consonance with his indebtedness to Naiyāyikas like Yāmuna, he explicitly gestures towards the *pramāṇas*, the criteria of valid knowledge that supply a watchword to the logical epistemologists. ‘Critical’ in the translation given above renders *pramāṇasahakṛta*, more literally ‘accompanied by a valid means of knowledge.’ The study of the *siddhānta*-system could only be admitted as licit insofar as it accords with the accepted truth conditions established in a more widely accepted and acceptable knowledge system like Nyāya. The sense of *pramāṇa* here however, exceeds its strict sense of an epistemological criterion: the term indexes precisely Veṅkaṭanātha’s own scholarly self-understanding of what he is doing, in a way that extends from Yāmuna’s logical demonstration but is answerable to the evidentiary conditions of textual interpretation. By referring to his scholarly project as *pramāṇasahakṛta*, Veṅkaṭanātha suggests that the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* be understood as a critical enterprise, in a way similar to how the term has been used to distinguish the textual scholarship of the early modern and modern West. But this methodological leap that did not take place in a vacuum: Veṅkaṭanātha, the lion among philosophers and poets, was equally leonine in the company of a wider, if now almost entirely unknown, company of Vaiṣṇava critics and textual exegetes.

Earlier Canons of Vaiṣṇava Textual Criticism

When Veṅkaṭanātha actually sets down to the task he sets himself, carefully citing and adjudicating the testimony of these scriptures, what emerges is a quite new relationship to his textual object. This can be seen first of all in his approach to a problem that is collateral to the *siddhānta*-system as such. Veṅkaṭanātha addresses the troubling presence of passages in both the scriptures of the Pañcarātrins and the other great ritual tradition of the southern Vaiṣṇavas, the Vaikhānasas, in which each of the two religions of Viṣṇu appear to condemn the observances of the other. After first citing an unnamed Vaikhānasa work, in which the Pañcarātra is rejected on the grounds of its being non-Vedic, and the Pañcarātrin text *Tantrasārasamuccaya*, in which both the efficacy and the propriety of the Vaikhānasa is called into question, Veṅkaṭanātha turns to the yet more problematic appearance of such passages in major works of scripture:¹⁵

15 *Rakṣā*, 23–24: *yāni ca pādmapārameśvarādīṣv ativādavacanāni tāni nūnam ikṣubhaḥṣaṇa-*

And as for the abusive statements found in such scriptures as the *Pāḍma* and the *Pārameśvara saṃhitā*-s, surely these were interpolated by those eager to eat sugarcane [*ikṣubhakṣaṇacikīrṣubhiḥ*¹⁶], or they were intro-

*cikīrṣubhiḥ prakṣiptāni parasparasthānākramaṇalolupair *paṭubhir* [Ed's ms. *ja*; Ed. *vaṭubhir*] *vā pūjakādhamair nīveśitāni*.

- 16 The text here is problematic. I adopt with some hesitation the reading accepted by the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*'s editors, despite the strong attestation of a variant reading *ikṣubhakṣakartṛcikīrṣubhiḥ* (this is found in the edition's MSS *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *gha*, the last of these being the editors' professed "best available" ms.). This latter reading was accepted by Virarāghavācārya in his edition of Venkaṭanātha's *raṁṣā* texts; he also supplies the explanatory note "*vaikhānasān pāñcarātrikāṃś ca ikṣubhakṣakartṛn—sotsāhakalahapravṛttān kartum icchadbhiḥ*", ("... by those wishing to make the Vaikhānasas and the Pāñcarātrins into performers of sugar-cane eating, [i.e.] be engaged in violent quarrels."). This is nevertheless a strained phrase that is difficult to justify in the language of an author of such polished elegance as Venkaṭanātha. It is in fact typical of the author's style that this compound seems to embed within it both a learned reference in Sanskrit and a turn of phrase borrowed from the spoken Tamil of his day: *ikṣubhakṣaṇa* recalls the grammarian's example *ikṣubhakṣikā* "a piece of candy" (thus *Kāśikāvṛtti ad* Pāṇini 3.3.11), while the underlying sense of the expression—that the dishonest interpolators were above all greedily self-interested in feathering their own nests—recalls the Tamil idiom *karumpu tiṇṇak kūli* ('wages for eating sugarcane,' said of a pleasant task by which one profits further). The idiom is available in the modern language, but it possesses a history stretching back before Venkaṭanātha's own time: it can be found in the commentaries on Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymōli* of Pēriyavāccāṇṇipillai and Vaṭukkuttiruvitipillai, both active in Śrīraṅgam in the late thirteenth century. Commenting on *Tiruvāymōli* 9.1.8, both include the phrase *karumpu tiṇṇak kūli koṭṭupparaip pole ivarkaḷaiy apekṣikka veṇṭuvate eṇukku*, "I must rely only on them, just as I would on like those who give wages for eating sugarcane". Both commentaries (respectively called the '24,000-unit' commentary and the *Ītu* or '36,000-unit') are regarded as the written transcriptions of the Śrīvaiṣṇava master Nampillai's oral teachings on the *Tiruvāymōli*; on their mixture of literary and colloquial registers see K.K.A. Venkatachari, *The Maṇipravāla literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas: 12th to 15th century A.D.* (Bombay: Ananthacharya Research Institute, 1978), 72 ff. I would like to record my gratitude to Dominic Goodall and Jean-Luc Chevillard for their suggestions of the interpretation of Venkaṭanātha's phrase, and for directing me to these parallels in the *Kāśikā* and the *Ītu*.

Further, a closely parallel expression also occurs in a contemporaneous inscription found on the second *prākāra* wall of the Raṅgasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam datable to the second decade of the fourteenth century, thus easily within Venkaṭanātha's lifetime and in a location with which he is closely associated. This forms a short independent *praśasti* text in honor of the king of Kerala, Ravivarman Kulaśekharadeva, attributed to one Kavibhūṣaṇa. The fourteenth of this sixteen-verse sequence reads (*Epigraphia Indica* vol. 4, no. 18, ln. 12) *sevyas tais tair gguṇair eva sevituṃ yad dadāsi naḥ* [[]] *eṣā*

duced by clever, unscrupulous priests, who wished to infringe upon each others' religious establishments.

The first of several arguments that Veṅkaṭanātha entertains here is that these verses are later interpolations into the pristine scriptures, and he presents a seemingly disenchanted argument for such an inclusion—the desire to traduce the texts' readers and to serve the interpolators' own selfish purposes.¹⁷ He is thus evidently willing to turn his critical eye onto the works he and his coreligionists see as divine revelation, not just onto the dubious authorities of a doctrinal opponent (as in his condemnation of the *pāpiṣṭhāḥ* found in the *Śatadūṣaṇī*).

It is by no means novel that Veṅkaṭanātha is alert to the fact that texts can so disfigured: the idea of *prakṣepa* or 'interpolation' long predates him,¹⁸ appearing, for instance, in the discussions of literary commentators in the rejection of spurious verses. What is remarkable here, however, is the counterfactual with which he continues:¹⁹

On the other hand, after consulting the readings of multiple independent manuscripts, should we consider these passages in which the [two sys-

yadupate satyam iṣṭubhakṣaṇadakṣinā [||], "The fact that you, Lord of the Yadus, who are served by so many virtues, give us [the ability] to serve you, this indeed is wages for eating sugarcane." This entirely reproduces the Tamil idiom, only substituting the lexeme *dakṣinā*, "ritual fee" for Tamil *kūli*. On this undated inscription, much of which is identical to a record of the same king from the Aruḷāḷpērumāl temple in Kāñcīpuram dated to 1315–1316 (*Epigraphia Indica* vol. 4, no. 17), see Kielhorn's introduction to his editions of both (145–146, 148–149)], Krishnaswami Aiyangar, "Ravivarman Kulaśekhara (The Emergence of Travancore into Historical View)," *New Indian Antiquary* 1 (1938): 163–169; and Vielle, "La date de la *Jaiminīyasaṃhitā*," 322–323.

17 Cf. Colas, "Cultes et courants du Vishnouisme en Inde du Sud. Quelques observations a partir des textes," in *Les ruses du salut. Religion et politique dans le monde indien*, ed. M.-L. Reiniche and H. Stern (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, 1995), 117, and especially n. 32; he renders the passage "Litt. «les pires des prêtres», qu'ils soient «désireux de s'introduire dans la place de l'autre», ou «peu évolués» (*vaṭu* [?])" (for the reading *vaṭu*, lit. "boy", see f.n. 15 above).

18 Colas "Critique et Transmission," 44–49 and Pollock "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 111–114.

19 *Rakṣā*, 25: *athaitāni parasparāpakarṣavacanāny asaṃkīṇabahuḥkośapāthāvalokanād āptabhāṣitānīti manyemahi, tathāpi 'prātaḥ prātar anṛtaṃ te vadanti purodayāj juhvati ye 'gnihotram' ityādiśūditahomaprasaṃsārthānuditahomanindāvat prakrāntaśāstraprasāst-yapratipādanaparatvena netavyāni.*

tems] revile each other to be genuine, they need nevertheless to be understood as intended only to praise the system in question. This is just like such cases as the condemnation of the practice of the morning oblation prior to sunrise, which is intended to praise the offering occurring after the sunrise, as [in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*]: “Those who offer the morning oblation before the sun’s rise speak untruth each and every morning.”

Here Venkatanātha explicitly demonstrates just what a ‘critical examination’ of texts constitutes for him: that we might through a systematic investigation establish the incidence of a given textual passage, “after consulting the readings of multiple independent manuscripts” (*asaṃkīrṇabahuakośapāṭhāvalokanāt*). While there are certainly other references by scholars writing in Sanskrit to the investigation of the incidence of a reading in multiple copies of the same work,²⁰ these are exceedingly rare. Venkatanātha’s expression here reveals his familiarity with methods of textual criticism as it was practiced by his co-religionists very close to his own era. For evidence of this, we can rely on the testimony of Uḍāli Varadarāja, the earliest extant commentator on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, whose *Vivekatilaka* (“The Ornament of Discernment”), was probably completed in the late eleventh or twelfth century. In the opening verses to this now-fragmentary commentary, Uḍāli writes:

20 See, for example, the sixteenth century commentary *Vaiṣṇavatoṣiṇī* on *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 10.12.1: *etac cādhyāyatrayaṃ kecit tattvadarśinaḥ vaiṣṇavāḥ vigītam ity āhuḥ. tac cāsaṃgatam, bahupustakeṣu dṛśyamānatvāt* (“Some learned Vaiṣṇavas claim that these three chapters [i.e. 10.10–10.12] are inauthentic. This however does not stand to reason, as they can be found in many manuscripts.”) I draw this reference from Bhattacharya, “Use of Manuscripts in Textual Criticism,” p. 224 n. 3; see also his references to Gopālacakraṇvartin’s commentary on the *Saptasatī*, (219, 221, and 223, nn.). This reference, though much later than Venkatanātha, suggests that this interest in collation may have been something more widely shared among scholars operating within a Vaiṣṇava theistic milieu. Prior to Venkatanātha’s time, though almost certainly unavailable to him, is Hemacandra’s statement in his *Deśināmamālā*, ad 1.47: *bahutarapustakaprāmāṇyāc ca niyate vartmani pravṛtāḥ smaḥ* ([‘As opposed to those who read *avaacciam* for *ayataṃciam*], we are embarked upon the surer path, owing to the authority of a greater number of manuscripts.’) On this latter work—a remarkable product of twelfth-century Prakrit lexicographical philology—cf. Pollock, “Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out,” 402–405 (Pollock’s rendering of this same passage (403) somewhat differs from my own); see also Herman Tieken, “Hala’s Sattasāi as a Source of Pseudo-Deśi Words,” *Bulletin d’Etudes Indiennes* 10 (1992): 221–267, for a critique of the adequacy of Hemacandra’s methods.

Certain men, lacking sufficient ability with other scripts like the *nāgara* alphabet, have in certain places copied out a faulty reading of the text, following the traditional understanding. And as a result, in the present work, the corrected reading can be seen here and there, owing to the examination of many manuscripts that have been brought from many locales.²¹

There is every reason to believe that this important work of scholarship by his fellow Vaiṣṇava was known to Veṅkaṭanātha. While it is therefore possible to see a direct echo of Uḍāli's *bahukośaparikṣaṇāt* ('owing to the examination of many copies,' written in verse) in Veṅkaṭanātha's *bahukośapāthāvalokanāḍ* ('after consulting the readings of many manuscripts'),²² it seems equally likely that both men were drawing on a piece of scholarly conventional wisdom, an implicit guideline of practice to check the written testimony of more than one copy in case of doubt. Uḍāli, moreover, not only explicitly argued for such a proto-empiricist text criticism, he apparently practiced what he preached, rejecting as spurious the so-called *Ādityahrdayam* or hymn to the sun from the *Rāmāyaṇa's Yuddhakāṇḍa*.²³ If it is possible to generalize from our scanty surviving testimony of Uḍāli Varadarāja's editorial and scholarly habits—and

- 21 *nāgarādiṣu varṇeṣu nātyantanipuṇair naraiḥ* | **khaṇḍaśaḥ* [my conjecture; *khaṇḍane*, ms.] *skhalitaḥ pāṭhaḥ pāramparyeṇa likhyate* || *ato 'tra samyakpāṭhaś ca tatra tatra pradarśyate* | *bahudeśasamānītabahukośaparikṣaṇāt* ||. I do not currently have access to the sole surviving manuscript of this unpublished, lacunose work (GOML R3409). I rely instead on the extract quoted in Raghavan, "Uḍāli's commentary on the Rāmāyaṇa. The date and identification of the author and the discovery of his commentary," *Annals of Oriental Research, University of Madras* 6, no. 2 (Sanskrit section, separately paginated) (1942): 6.
- 22 Not only does this direct invocation closely accord with Veṅkaṭanātha's counterfactual, it also presages Nilakaṇṭha's oft-cited account of his methods of *Mahābhārata* textual criticism by approximately a half-millennium (on these, see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 230–231; and Minkowski, "What makes a work 'traditional'? On the Success of Nilakaṇṭha's *Mahābhārata* commentary," in *Boundaries, Dynamics, and Construction of Traditions in South Asia*, ed. Federico Squarcini (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2005), 225–252).
- 23 So at least is he said to have done by the later Śrīvaiṣṇava commentator Govindarāja (ca. 1475–1500, cf. Rangaswami Aiyangar, "Govindarāja," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 23 (1943): 41). See Raghavan, "Uḍāli's commentary on the Rāmāyaṇa." On Uḍāli's rejection of the *Ādityahrdayam* see Robert Goldman, Sally Sutherland Goldman, and Barend van Nooten Goldman, trans., *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India. Volume 6: Yuddhakāṇḍa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1341–1342, who report Govindarāja testimony about his silence on the independent hymn's verses, and that it is not reckoned in his enumeration of the *sargas* that make up the *Yud-*

Veṅkaṭanātha's counterfactual suggests precisely that we can—then it is also possible to impute a preexisting tension finding expression in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, between an emergent critical impulse that acknowledges the problem of authenticity in even the texts most valued by Vaiṣṇavas, and a desire to conservatively retain the shape of the Pañcarātra canon.

Where Veṅkaṭanātha's real innovation lies, then, is his insistence that these sources be *asaṃkīrṇa*, rendered 'independent' in the passage translated above, but literally 'unmixed.' This is a grammatical variation on the theme of *saṃkara*, the term used to characterize the system of the *siddhāntas* in the chapter's opening statement on method; here, however Veṅkaṭanātha certainly seems to be referring to multiple unrelated copies of the same text. For the anonymous theorists of the *siddhāntas*, *saṃkara* needed to be avoided in order to retain the distinctiveness of each *siddhānta* at the level of its liturgical practice. In repurposing this, Veṅkaṭanātha focused in on a principle for adjudicating readings similar to the avowed methods of Uḍāli's *Vivekatilaka*, but possessing a sharpened sense of the stakes of ascertaining the independence of individual manuscript witnesses as a means of assessing their shared text. A doctrine earlier employed by the anonymous philologist-compilers of the *tantras* to theorize the organization of their *canon* thus furnished Veṅkaṭanātha with the conceptual raw materials to think about the constitution of an individual text. While this may not have been original to him, his is the most sophisticated and self-aware reflection on such explicitly text-critical and text-historical principles that I have ever seen in a premodern Sanskrit author.²⁴

Reading further in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, we find yet more evidence of this expanded sense of a philological problematic. Veṅkaṭanātha's project throughout is to argue for the hierarchized unity of the different *siddhāntas* within the ambit of a single Pāñcarātra religion, with the *tantra*- and *tantrāntarasiddhāntas* clearly subordinate to the two 'higher' *siddhāntas*, and with the *āgamasiddhānta* granted ultimate primacy.²⁵ In the course of tracing down the subsidiary objections to this hierarchy, Veṅkaṭanātha turns to a passage that casts crucial light on the origins and wider context of his text-critical thinking. He

dhakāṇḍa; they go on to mention that "[i]t should be noted, however, that our transcript of [Uḍāli's] commentary ... includes this passage," and that its reckoning seems to include it as a separate *sarga*.

24 P.K. Gode's brief note ("Textual Criticism in the Thirteenth Century," in *Woolner Commemoration Volume*, ed. Mohammad Shafi (Lahore: Meherchand Lacchmandas, 1940), 106–108) on the critical principles in Vādirāja and Hemādri forms a partial exception to this, but neither man evinces the same sort of methodological perspicuity seen here.

25 Again, see Leach, "The Three Jewels."

begins this discussion quite remarkably with an exact textual reference: “in the twenty-second chapter of the *Sāttvatasamhitā*, in the definition of a religious teacher that follows immediately upon the definition of the *samayin*, *putraka*, and *sādhaka* classes of initiates.”²⁶ Authors writing in Sanskrit are rarely so precise; this marks a little innovation, but a real one all the same. Veṅkaṭanātha evinces a similar precision elsewhere, both in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* and in other texts;²⁷ it appears that scholarly scruple possessed for him a certain rhetorical demonstration value. While his practice of citation cannot easily be generalized from this limited evidence, it suggests that Veṅkaṭanātha drew his quotations from physical text-artifacts, rather than quoting from memory; the density of his references further implies that he made reference to a collection of such texts—a nascent Pañcarātra archive—in order to support his argument.

The passage which he then goes on to quote here is highly significant.²⁸

26 *Rakṣā*, 29: *śrīsāttvate dvāviṃśe paricchede samayiputrakasādhakalakṣaṇoktyanantaram ācāryalakṣaṇe*.

27 Elsewhere in the first chapter of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, he cites “the divisions of the *siddhāntas* and their subdivisions, as they are illustrated in the revered *Paṇḍitakara*, in its chapter on the discrimination of different kinds of ritually qualified practitioners, with the intention of delimiting the domain of these practitioners” (*Rakṣā*, 6: *śrīpaṇḍitakara cādhikārinirūpaṇādhyāye pratiniyatādhikāriṇiṣayavābhiprāyeṇaiva siddhāntabhedas tadavāntarabhedas ca darśitaḥ*); more briefly, he cites by name the *Pādma*’s chapters on the disinstallation of old temple images (16, *jṛṇoddhārādhyāye*), and on penance (ibid., *prāyaścittādhyāye*); the *Pārameśvara*’s chapters on image installation (17, *pratiṣṭhādhyāye*), on penance (18), and on the order of the liturgy (p. 19 *caturvidhapūjānirūpaṇādhyāye*; he notes that these verses are repeated in the chapter on penances, ibid.). All of these citations are given in rapid succession, as a series of proof-texts for the avoidance of *sāṃkara*; note that none are as exact as the reference to the *Sāttvata*. The only other text cited with such precision in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* is the *Bhagavadgītā* (9, citing the eighteenth chapter), a work almost certainly known by heart by every one of its intended readers (contrast Maheśvarānanda’s citational habits, *infra*, pp. 142ff). He shows similar scruple in some of the citations found in his *Saccaritrarakṣā*, citing the *adhyāya* and section of quotations from scriptural works (*Pārameśvara* [137–139], *Viṣṇutattva* [139, 140], *Kālotara* [139]), the *Gītābhāṣya* of Yādavaprakāśa (141), and the *Tattvanirṇaya* of Nārāyaṇa (ibid.), as well as *smṛti* texts (citing the eighty-second *adhyāya* of the *Viṣṇudharma* [164; the passage in question is found in the eightieth chapter of its edition] and seventy-third chapter of the *Nārādīya* [p. 181]). This list is not exhaustive; it is striking that most of these references are closely clustered together.

28 *Rakṣā*, 29 (= *Sāttvata* 22: 22–27): *tatra vai trividhaṃ vākyaṃ divyaṃ ca munibhāṣitam | pauruṣaṃ cāravindākṣa tadbhedam avadhāraya || yad arthādhyam asaṃdigdhaṃ svaccham alpākṣaram sthīram | tat pārameśvaraṃ vākyaṃ ājñāsiddhaṃ hi mokṣadam || praśaṃsakam vai siddhīnām saṃpravartakam apy atha | sarveṣāṃ rañjakam gūḍhaniścayī-*

[Scriptural] utterance is of three types: divine, the utterances of sages, and that of human origin. Lotus-eyed one, pay close attention to the difference between these. The utterance that is replete with meaning, uncontested, clear, precise and fixed is a creation of God: it has the force of a command, and gives liberation. That which describes magical accomplishments or which gives instructions [in their acquisition], which is pleasing to anyone, and which capable of rendering clear hidden matters, should be understood as a sage's utterance: it gives the results of all four stages of life. An utterance that is incoherent, disconnected, prolix yet spare in meaning, and which does not complete a more primary teaching is known to be a human utterance. It should be avoided, [since] it is a repository of accomplishments that yield no result, and it leads to hell. But a human teaching that congrues with widely-known subject matter, that is coherent in its teaching, and insightful may be accepted, just as it is were a sage's teaching.

The philological interests of the scriptural author-compilers are here shown *en clair*, as are their concerns with controlling the textual proliferation all around them, a proliferation in which they themselves were of course active participants. The question of textual corruption and of interpolation is in fact something that the Pāñcarātra scriptural composers themselves provide criteria for recognizing: Veñkaṭanātha's anonymous predecessors were as concerned with separating good text from bad, as was he.

In a splendid irony, however, these verses themselves were condemned by certain Vaiṣṇava readers as interpolations, as Veñkaṭanātha informs us, filling out in the process the larger institutional context of his philology:²⁹

Here, 'which does not complete a more primary teaching' refers to having a meaning which contradicts either a divine utterance or that of the sages;

karaṇakṣamam || munivākyam ca tad viddhi caturvargaphalapradam | anarthakam asaṃbaddham alpārthaṃ śabdaḍambaram || anīrvāhakam ādyokter vākyam tat pauraṣaṃ smṛtam | heyam cānarthasiddhīnām ākaraṇaṃ narakāvaham || prasiddhārtānūvādam yat saṃgatārthaṃ vilakṣaṇam | api cet pauraṣaṃ vākyam grāhyam tan munivākyavat ||

- 29 *Rakṣā*, 29–30: *atrānīrvāhakam ādyokteḥ iti divyamunibhāṣitayor viruddhārthatvam ucyate. asaṃbaddham iti pūrvāparaviruddhatvam. tad idam ubhayam api nikṛṣṭasaṃhitātvyāgena utkrṣṭasaṃhitāparigrahavacane śrīsāttvatapauṣkaranārādīyapādmādivirodhāt sāmānyena sarvasaṃkaraniṣedhaparasvapūrvāparagranthavirodhām avadhārayanto dhṛṣṭabuddhayaḥ katicana tantratantrāntaramaryādāpravṛttasthānākramaṇalubdhāgamamantrasiddhāntābhīmānīpuruṣakṛtaprakṣepo 'yam iti manyante.*

‘disconnected’ means that it contradicts what precedes or follows it [in its context]. Some bold intellects, noticing that both of these two [qualities ascribed to the *pauruṣavākya*] themselves contain a contradiction with earlier and later passages that aim to prohibit all scriptural conflation in general, in that they contradict the statements of such works as the *Sāttvata* itself, the *Pauṣkara*, the *Nārādīya*, and the *Pādma* in regard to their position of adopting a hierarchically superior scripture by way of rejecting an inferior scripture. They believe this to be an interpolation, committed by men who are arrogant partisans of the *āgama*- and *mantrasiddhāntas*, greedy to infringe on the religious establishments that are maintained under the tenets of the *tantra*- and *tantrāntarasiddhāntas*.

It is easy enough to detect a sarcastic undertone when Veṅkaṭanātha speaks of the “certain bold intellects” (*dhṛṣṭabuddhayaḥ katicana*) who had so atheized the passage, on both textual grounds of its disagreement with other scriptures and on the practical grounds that it seems yet another effort at self-aggrandizement, in this case intramurally within the Vaiṣṇava fold. These would appear to be scholars who were *grosso modo* inheritors of the sort of text-critical project that animated Uḍāli Varadarāja’s *Rāmāyaṇa* scholia. The heightened sensitivity that Veṅkaṭanātha demonstrates towards the contents of his religion’s canon was not his alone; he appears to have known fellow Vaiṣṇavas—above and beyond the anonymous *tantra*-authors themselves—who were willing to exercise their critical judgment over their scriptures. In the event, Veṅkaṭanātha rejects this effort to argue against the authenticity of this passage, perhaps because it supplies such a useful warrant for his own strictly text-internal critical efforts. As in the case of the mutual vituperations of the Pañcarātrins and the Vaikhānasas, Veṅkaṭanātha’s strategy is one of conservation rather than excision.³⁰

Others, however, through the same line of thinking presented earlier, hold that these aim to praise the *mantra*- (or the *āgama*-) *siddhānta*. After all, in all the great extent of time since the Golden Age at the beginning of this cosmic era, the great Ṛṣis—whether in the *Mahābhārata*, or in any of

30 *Rakṣā*, 30: *anye tu prāguktanyāyena mantrasiddhāntāduttiparatām ātiṣṭhante. na khalv etāvata kālena kalpārambhakṛtanyugāt prabhṛti saṁtanyamāneṣu sāttvataśāstrasamhitā-rotobhedeṣu apakṛṣṭasamhitām parityajyotkṛṣṭasamhitām kaścit parijagrāheti mahābhārata śrīmadvarāḥapurāṇādiṣu vā paraḥśateṣu pañcarātraprastāveṣu maharṣayaḥ sūcayanti. na cārvācinair apy ācāryair itaḥ pūrvaṁ tathā kṛtam iti saṁpradāyavidaḥ śiṣṭā vidām āsuh. ataḥ śiṣṭānuṣṭhānabalād eva stutiparatvam adhyavasyāmaḥ.*

the great *purāṇas* like the *Varāha*, or in the corpus of the Pañcarātra which numbers more than a hundred texts—have never indicated that someone has rejected one of the inferior scriptures amongst the various traditions that make up the scriptures of the extant Sātvata [i.e. Pañcarātra] system and adopted another, superior scripture. Nor, furthermore, do any of those learned men schooled in the tradition know of this being done at some earlier point, even by the later *ācāryas*. So it is that, in accord with the force of learned custom, we hold that this passage is meant to praise.

In the pedantic way that he rebukes these would-be critics, we can perhaps see whom exactly it was that the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* stigmatized as snakes in its opening verse: it is those members of his own religion who are bent on rashly cutting apart the fabric of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures whom Veṅkaṭanātha wished to delegitimize. His solution here is again a conservative one, relying on well-worn exegetical methods rather than text-critical excision: he takes implicit recourse here to the theories of Mīmāṃsā, the orthodox school of Vedic textual interpretation, to both defuse the passages' meaning (by taking away their injunctive force and claiming them to be *praśastyartha*, only meant to praise, like the Veda's explanatory *arthavādas*) and to subordinate them to the authoritative realm of traditionally-sanctioned usage. The reference to "the force of learned custom," *śiṣṭānusthānabalād*, obliquely invokes the argument of the third section of the first *adhyāya* of the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, the so-called *smṛtipāda*, in which the injunctive force of non-Vedic but morally valorized religious practices are cautiously admitted by the ritualists.³¹ This argument is followed by a brief rehearsal of several others, couched in an appeal to the normative *pramāṇas* of direct perceptual experience and inference, centering on the question of the enduring presence of the hierarchically 'lower' *siddhāntas* in actually existing temple worship.³²

31 Sheldon Pollock, "The «Revelation» of «Tradition»: śruti, smṛti, and the Sanskrit Discourse of Power," in *Lex Et Litterae: Essays on Ancient Indian Law and Literature in Honor of Oscar Botto*, ed. Siegfried Lienhard and Irma Piovano (Torino: Edizione dell'Orso, 1997), 395–417 provides the best overview of this Mīmāṃsā doctrine.

32 *Rakṣā*, 30: *yadi caivaṃ śāstrārthaḥ syāt, etāvātā kālena tantratantrāntarasthānāni sarvāṇi mantrasiddhāntādīnā vyāpyeran. itaḥ pūrvam anuvṛttāv api parastād etadbalāvalambanena tantratantrāntarasiddhāntayoḥ sarvatrocchedaḥ prasajyeta. atha ced aihikabhogādi-prācūryāt puruṣāṇāṃ ca trivargaprāvaṇyātīśayāt tantratantrāntarayoh sarvatrānuvṛttiḥ sambhavatīti manvīthāḥ tarhi rājarāṣṭrasamṛddhyartheṣu sthāneṣu aihikaphalapracurayor eva tantratantrāntarayor yathāpūrvam avasthānam ucitam. na hi rājasu rāṣṭreṣu vā sula-bhāḥ kevalamumuṣavaḥ.* "If this were in fact the meaning of the teaching [i.e. that one

This appeal—itself broadly empirical—really lies at the heart of his argument, as becomes increasingly clear in the final pages of the chapter. His treatment of the problem of the avoidance of *saṃkara* to actual temple worship is intricate, involving an attempt to rationalize several attested alternatives to the *siddhānta* scheme. There is even a suggestion of the turbulent wider world in which Veṅkaṭanātha wrote, in the wake of the breakdown of Coḷa imperial hegemony.³³ In working through this argument—here his main text is an extended passage from the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*—Veṅkaṭanātha returns to a three-fold model of *divya*, *munibhāṣita*, and *pauruṣa* whose inclusion in the *Sāttvata* he had earlier labored to defend. While unpacking the *Pārameśvara*'s treatment of this model, he tellingly defines the last of the three terms as “a human utterance, something taught by a mere mortal not possessed of *yoga* which, differing from divine utterances and that taught by the sages, is *potentially lacking in validity*”.³⁴ Here, in line with the theories of the earlier author-compilers of the *Sāttvata* and the *Pārameśvara*, Veṅkaṭanātha acknowledges the existence within his own tradition of that for which he castigates others in his *Śatadūṣaṇī*: the presence of works of human authorship mixed in with

should abandon hierarchically ‘lower’ scriptures in favor of those more highly ranked], then after all the time, *tantra*- and *tantrāntara*-[*siddhānta*] establishments would be overrun by the *mantrasiddhānta* and the *āgamasiddhānta*. And even if they had managed to endure prior to the present, the utter extinction of the *tantra*- and *tantrāntara*- *siddhānta* would eventually result, since the force of these [higher *siddhāntas*] would prevail. Now, you might think that the *tantra*- and *tantrāntara* *siddhāntas* would possibly endure everywhere, since they are filled, in the first instance, with this-worldly results and since men overwhelmingly tend towards the three worldly goals of human life [instead of the fourth goal of *mokṣa* or final liberation]; but in that case, according to the same line of thinking just given, it would stand to reason that there would only be the observance of those two, the *tantra* and *tantrāntara*, in religious establishments devoted to the well-being of king and realm, inasmuch as they specialize in worldly goals. After all, it is not easy to find men devoted solely to spiritual ends among kings or their subjects.” I understand these counterfactuals to each be grounded in an appeal to *pramāṇa*: the absence of direct evidence of the obliteration of the lower *siddhāntas* in the first case, and the negative inference—grounded in an oblique appeal to human nature—about their lack of aggrandizement in the second.

- 33 For instance, see Veṅkaṭanātha's comments on the problem that arises “regarding those who are ignorant as to how they should proceed in the cases of those shrines in which the certain knowledge of the tradition has been lost, owing to such circumstances as long-standing disturbances in the realm” (*Rakṣā*, 41: *cirakālarāṣṭrakṣobhādīnā vicchinnapāraṃparyapratyabhijñāneṣu sthāneṣu kiṃkartavyatāmūḍhān prati*).
- 34 *Rakṣā*, 39–40: *divyāt munibhāṣitā ca vyatiraktaṃ saṃbhavadaprāmāṇyam ayogibhiḥ manujamātraiḥ prañītaṃ pauruṣaṃ vākyaṃ*, my emphasis.

divine revelation. For all that he is critical of other Vaiṣṇava efforts to exclude texts from the canon, he here acknowledges that some of the scriptures of his religion simply must have been composed by human beings. These deserve a place in the accepted list of works, but hierarchically ranked below works that (on strong text-internal as well as external grounds) Veṅkaṭanātha was certain were the teachings of Viṣṇu himself. Using the techniques bequeathed to him by his unknown Vaiṣṇava forebears, he was able to articulate a theory of his religion's texts that asserted their supermundane origins while acknowledging their worldly, historical existence.

On the Shores of the Milk Ocean: Veṅkaṭanātha's Poetry as Philology

Not only was Veṅkaṭanātha a precise textual scholar, he evidently worked within a milieu in which other scholars were practicing similar methods with the Pāñcarātra corpus. Given how little we know of the social world of medieval philology, it is difficult to draw wider conclusions about the institutional bases of such scholarship, but we can infer that in Veṅkaṭanātha's immediate context, the task of scriptural philology extended beyond the authors and compilers of the texts themselves, while in his own scholarship we can see an apparent tension between the conservative defense of the canon and a thinking-through of a new conceptual basis on which philological scholarship might operate. The novelty of his approach can be seen first of all in the technical details of his argument—his care with citation and his awareness of the problems inherent in manuscript transmission—but also in the sense of the problematic itself, that the *a priori* arguments inherited from Yāmuna were not sufficient to the complex empirical situation with which he was faced, and that this situation called for methods of study that were rigorously reasoned and attentive to the verbal fabric of the *saṃhitās*. Philological methods and theological politics seem to have been significantly interanimating in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*: this can be seen above all in Veṅkaṭanātha's adoption of the *saṃkara* model of his scriptural sources as a general organon of textual interpretation. Textual 'mixture' was to be avoided at all cost, whether in the hierarchy of authors, the teaching and practice of ritual observance, or in the adjudication of the reliability of a given scriptural passage. For Veṅkaṭanātha, these problems all possessed a single logic, and the methods of their avoidance were thus mutually reinforcing.

I would further suggest that Veṅkaṭanātha's novelty extends beyond just philological technique and into something that might be called the transfor-

mation of philological consciousness. Practice and consciousness are in any case mutually constitutive, but here the work undertaken in this little treatise (when measured against such massive productions of Veṅkaṭanātha's as the *Rahasyatrayasāram* or the *Nyāyasiddhāṅjana*) suggests ways to look at other portions of his oeuvre in a different light. Yet it is not Veṅkaṭanātha's other śāstric works that the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* especially illuminates, but instead his literary writings. We saw earlier how the text's opening verse—an exquisite little masterpiece in its own right—constituted a deeply intertextual, playful meditation on the central philological problem of an authoritative textual tradition and its fraught interpretation. This is a theme seen over and over again in Veṅkaṭanātha's poetry, perhaps most acutely in his *Haṃsasamdeśa*, a reimagined sequel to Kālidāsa's great *Meghadūta*. As Bronner and Shulman have characterized this remarkable poem, it is shot through with "a complex and sometimes ironic awareness of his unique place within a millennium-old tradition", driven by the "radical and conscious reconfiguration" of intertexts found in Kālidāsa and the epics, in which their metrically keyed phrases, figures of speech, and recurrent themes are taken up and transfigured.³⁵ This relationship to his literary sources, extending from integrative reinvention to something very much like intralinguistic literary translation, points towards a relationship with prior texts that amounts to a creative literary philology.

This can be seen most acutely, however, in the *Draṃḍopaniṣattātparyaratanāvalī*, Veṅkaṭanātha's Sanskrit *vade mecum* to Nammālvār's Tamil *Tiruvāymōli*. Most of this text is devoted to a highly compressed tour of its mammoth precursor, virtuosically crafted into the regal *sragdharā* meter. Its opening verses, however, are programmatic: drawing on the foundational myth of the gods' churning of the milk ocean for the nectar of immortality, Veṅkaṭanātha labors to describe his own effort at interpretation-through-translation. 'Making a churning-rope of the tradition upon the mountain that is my own intellect' (*prajñākhye manthaśaile ... netrāyan sampradāyaṃ*)—'the tradition' here referring to the vigorous habit of exegesis on the text which preceded his work, which he punningly portrays as 'lovely in its evident virtues' (*prathitaguṇaruciṃ*; referring to the churning-rope, this perhaps means 'bright with broad threads')—'Veṅkaṭeśa' (in another low-key *śleṣa*, this refers to both the author and his deity) was entreated by wise men (*vibudhaiḥ*, also 'the gods'); churning the milk ocean of Nammālvār's esoteric work (which, parenthetically, provides the bed for the sleeping Viṣṇu throughout the cosmic night between the

35 See Bronner and Shulman, *Poems and Prayers*, xxiii–xlvi.

kalpas), he binds up the jewels that thus emerge from the thousand waves of the *Tiruvāymōli*'s sweet songs (the ocean being the proverbial birthplace of gems).³⁶ The verse is typically dense with detail: all of the textual scholar's raw materials are in evidence, ranging over his own intellect and learning to the inherited exegesis of his textual object.³⁷ But above all, there is the text itself, the pregiven stock of authoritative language in need of interpretation, in this case the oceanic breadth of Nammālvār's devotional Tamil masterpiece. Veṅkaṭanātha here reflects on his own situation when faced with this always-prior textual object, and so on both the pleasures of the text and on the sheer effort that making sense of it involves. It is perhaps as good a sketch of the inner workings of a philologist's psyche as one is likely to find.

For an author so prolific and so epochal in his significance, it is a challenge for the interpreter to know what, if anything, can be said within the compass of the explanation of a single work. Here, at the meeting point between philology and poetry, and between the open acknowledgement of the priority of tradition and the urge to innovation, is perhaps a fitting place to end with Veṅkaṭanātha. That similar energies find expression in his technical scholarship and his literary effusions is interesting in its own right (I am not the first to notice this³⁸); it is more widely significant when set within the argument of this essay, on the vicissitudes of philology in the South India of his era. As we have already seen, an interanimation between poetry and philology drove the innovations of form and content in Cekkīlār's *Pēriyapurāṇam*.³⁹ Veṅkaṭanātha probably knew Cekkīlār's work—he seems to have known everything—but he likely found it abhorrent, and would have for his part resisted any analogy

36 *Draṁḍopaniṣattātparyaratnāvalī*, vs. 2: *prajñākhye manthaśaile prathitagunaruṇim netrayan saṁpradāyaṁ tattallabdhiprasaktair anupadhi vibudhair arthito veṅkaṭeśaḥ | talpaṁ kalpāntayūnaḥ śaṭhjidupaniṣaddugdhasindhuṁ vimathnan grathnāti svādugāthālahiridaśaśatīnirgataṁ ratnajātam ||*

37 Unsurprisingly given the mammoth commentarial project of the Śrīvaiṣṇava exegesis on the *Tiruvāymōli*, this question of the traditional fore-structure of understanding preoccupies Veṅkaṭanātha in the opening to his *Ratnāvalī*: in vs. 1, it is the transmission or tradition of Nammālvār's work that mediates its saving power (*saṭharipubhaṇitih ... pāraṁ pāraṁparīto ... pratyak pratyakṣayen naḥ*, "Saṭharipu's words through their tradition directly reveal the far shore right before our eyes," I take the paradox of unmediated mediation to be a deliberate one of Veṅkaṭanātha's); in vs. 3, his reflections on the aesthetics of the work's eroticized devotion relies on an appeal to earlier scholastic authority (*deśikās tatra dūtāḥ*, "on this point, the teachers are the messengers").

38 See Friedhelm Hardy, "The Philosopher As Poet: A Study of Vedāntadeśika's *Dehalīśastuti*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 7, no. 3 (1979): 277–325.

39 See above, 44ff.

with it. But just as certainly, there are subtle connections that unite the great Vaiṣṇava's work with his close contemporary Maheśvarānanda, to whom I now turn. These connections are especially prominent in the antinomian Śaiva's own idiosyncratic fusion of the poetic and the philological. I began my account of Veṅkaṭanātha with a mention of the title—*kavitārkikakesarin*, 'lion among poets and philosophers'—that his tradition had bestowed upon him, suggesting that it might be augmented to reflect his edgy brilliance as a textual scholar. What all of this suggests is that perhaps philology—undenoted, as we have seen, in Sanskrit or Tamil—is already there, by implication, and that it is at the juncture of the priorities, skills, and commitments of poetry and of systematic thought that we may locate a place for the philological.

Flowers of Language: Maheśvarānanda's *Mahārthamañjarī*

The Dream

It would have been dark, perhaps after the moon had set, late at night in the temple. The adept would have been sitting, more in shadow than in the meager light the lamps afforded, surrounded by the accoutrements of his ritual discipline. Perhaps only the rustle of cloth nearby was there to remind him of the woman, who had joined him in his worship, as she sat nearby. Full of palm liquor, he had settled into a reverie: there in the deserted precincts of the temple, the adept surely was not anticipating any visitors. Such quiet stillness was exactly what his devotions called for, a moment outside of time. And so it was then that the goddess came.

She bore the marks of another member of his faith: the mendicant's rags, the trident that set her out as a votary of Śiva, matted hair through which one could see the bright stroke of vermillion on her brow. More telling still was her beggar's bowl: it was a human skull, inverted. He suspected that she was more than she appeared; fumbling, he paid her reverence, and ordered the woman there at his side to find some coins as a guest-gift. Perhaps he did this too hastily, for his visitor's mood seemed suddenly to darken: she dismissed the offered gift, and flashed her hand before him—her thumb perhaps resting on the first joint of her middle finger. Then, with a smile, she spoke: not in the tongue of his country, nor in Sanskrit, but in the cooing tones of the language of Mahārāṣṭra. Perhaps the adept grew suspicious—who would speak in Māhārāṣṭrī, a language of the songs women sing in the theatre?—but he would have had little time to ponder this before the mysterious woman touched her skull-bowl to his forehead, and just as quickly vanished. Mind dimmed with toddy, late in the night, the man must have wondered: was it all a dream?

We know all of this because the adept, writing under the name Maheśvarānanda, composed an account of this momentous event. The midnight encounter occurs at the midpoint of the story Maheśvarānanda tells: the story begins in the indeterminate past, and in the presence of his deity Śiva, in his awesome form as Bhairava, the Terrifying. While residing in “the jewelled pavilion, the space of consciousness,” the god once obliged the entreaties of his

consort to deliver a teaching of the secret nature of things. This teaching had subsequently been spread throughout the world of men by a series of masters as the Krama ('Sequence') or the Mahārtha ('The Great Purpose'). Shifting to an account of himself, written in the third person, Maheśvarānanda related the events of his late-night meeting and its morning sequel:

So, while still thinking over that great marvel, the great-minded man had the remaining offerings done, and so passed the entire night. At daybreak, he went to his teacher's house, and once he had worshipped the teacher's feet with folded hands, he related the night's events with courteous words. And so his teacher pondered the matter and resolved it right away, delighted (as this was a joyous occasion), the honorable man spoke to his pupil:

"No need to multiply meanings, the meaning, in its essence, is clear: both the fact that this *siddhayoginī* said, 'Away with these things,' and the fact that while she was making the number 'seven' on the blossom that is her hand, she said, 'Let this be brought to fruition by one who understands the nature of things':

this means that she has gone beyond any material offering, and desires something in the form of language, whereby the Supreme Goddess can be worshipped by words that are as good as *mantras*.

Surely the goddess Saptakoṭīśvarī is venerated by her, otherwise, she wouldn't have made such a gesture.

Thus you, in your vast eloquence, must compile seventy *sūtras*, pregnant with *mantras*, into a *tantra*, containing the Great Purpose. From your own mouth, purified by *In praise of the sandals*, a great book must at once be published, one similar to the ancient scriptures.

Furthermore, in this work, her language alone, an outpouring of sweet ambrosia, itself like to a powerful *mantra*, would add further still to its grandeur."

Taking this order of his compassionate teacher to heart, with an independent mind, he did for some days compose this *tantra*, a mirror of consciousness called *The Flower-Cluster of the Great Purpose*: For the great, a task begun without hesitation is bound to be fruitful. And so he did relate this churning of the ocean that is the Great Purpose to his teacher, learned in all the Vedas, *śāstras* and arts in this world.

And that clear-sighted one did himself explain that wisdom,
at the urging of his disciples, owing to their desire for self-reflection.
For, just as there is a fragrance which is perceived in a flower's bloom,
so too here, a commentary called *The Fragrance* should be there for
the taking.¹

This sketches in the basic details of the text at whose conclusion this passage is found: the *Mahārthamañjarī*, *The Flower-cluster of the Great Purpose* properly speaking, is a set of seventy *āryā* verses (and a final verse in the art-meter *śārdūlavikrīḍita*), composed in Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit: this is a language and a metrical form normally reserved for certain kinds of erotic poetry. These verses were accompanied by an autocommentary, the *Mahārthamañjarīparimala*, or the “Fragrance” of the *Flower-Cluster*, which forms the major part of Maheśvarānanda's complex text; it is here that we read of the conjoint text's inception. Together, these teach the nature of the worship of a complex pantheon of the Śaiva goddesses of the Krama, along with the theological principles that follow from this worship and much else beside.

The extended Sanskrit narrative that closes the *Parimala* is transparently an adaptation of a typical feature of a Śaiva *tantra*, its *āyātikrama* or the mythic narrative of the text's transmission from heaven to earth.² And this befits the

1 *Mahārthamañjarīparimala* (hereafter *Mañjarī*), 191: *atha tan mahad āścaryam aśnurvāno mahāmanāḥ | āracayārcanāśeṣam aśeṣam anayan niśam || prātar gurukulaṃ gatvā praṇamya caraṇau guroḥ | rātrivṛttāntam ācakhyau prāñjaliḥ praśritaiḥ padaiḥ || deśikendro 'pi saṃcintya niścitartha ca tatkṣaṇam | puṇyotsava iti prītaḥ śiṣyaṃ śrīmān abhāṣata || alam arthaprapaṇcena piṇḍito 'rthaḥ prakāśyate | alam arthair iti prāha yad iyaṃ siddhayoginī || yac ca saptocitāṃ saṃkhyāṃ kurvāṇā karakuḍmale | saphalikriyātām eṣā bhāvajñenety abhāṣata | tad ārthiṃ sṛṣṭim ullaṅghya śābdīṃ sā kāñcid icchati | yena mantrātmakaiḥ śābdaiḥ parameśvary upāśyate || saptakoṭīśvarī devī tayā nūnam upāśyate | anyathā tādrśim eva mudrāṃ na pratipādayet || tat tvayātra vidhātavyā sphitasārasvataśrīyā | sūtrāṇaṃ saptatis tantr mahārthe mantragarbhini || sadyas tvadvadanāt tasmāt pādukodayaśodhitāt | purātanāga-maprakhyo granthaḥ prakhyāyatām mahān || kiṃ ca bhāṣā tadīyaiva mādhyamīṃ tavarṣiṇī | aucityaṃ poṣayaty atra mahāmantrānusāriṇī || ity ājñāṃ deśikendrasya dayālor mūrdhni dharayan | mahārthamañjarīṃ nāma saṃviddarpaṇamaṇḍalam || tantraṃ dinaiḥ katipayaiḥ prababandha svatantradhiḥ | kāryārambho hi mahatām avilambena sidhyati || tac ca tattvavi-daṃ loke vedaśāstrakalāsv api | mahārthasindhumanthānaṃ śrāvayāmāsa deśikam || svayam eva ca tāṃ vidyāṃ svavimarśakutīhalāt | śiṣyāṇāṃ api nirbandhād vyācacaḥ vicakṣaṇaḥ || yathā hi puṣpamañjarīyā grāhyāḥ parimalo bhavet | tadvad asyām api grāhyā vyākhyā parimalāhvayā ||*

2 This is made self-consciously clear in Maheśvarānanda's opening stanza (*Mañjarī*, 188): *āyātir atha tantrasya kathyate kaulikoditā | yām ākarmaṇya pumān atra vimarśaucityam aśnute || “The*

author's repeated declaration, throughout his text, that he wishes his work to be understood as a *tantra*, a work of revelation in its own right. But this is a work that is very different from the other Śaiva texts of that name, either those written long before Maheśvarānanda's lifetime or those new *tantras* produced closer to him in time and space. These works, as we have repeatedly seen, were written in simple meter and often in poor, even barbarous, Sanskrit; moreover, they were not the avowed creation of human authors, but the supposed products of conversations between different sages and members of the Śaiva pantheon. Maheśvarānanda's root-verses—his *tantra*, properly speaking—are written in a lyrical form and in a refined literary Prakrit, with no framing narration whatsoever. His Sanskrit autocommentary, which comprises the vast bulk of his conjoint text, is written in Sanskrit prose or sometimes, as in the *āyātikrama*, in an elegant register of verse filled with literary flourishes, generally adheres to the scholarly-forensic conventions of *śāstra*, and is explicitly the product of this particular human author. In its duplex, bilingual form, its eclectic erudition and, above all, in the emphatic declaration of its author's idiosyncratic voice, there was no precedent for a *tantra* like Maheśvarānanda's work.

It might be objected that in describing his work as a *tantra* (and himself as a *tantrakṛt*, 'author of the *tantra*'), Maheśvarānanda was not necessarily claiming to be producing new revelation. For the word *tantra* is polysemic: most directly, it can refer to a loom or to its warp and so, by extension, can mean "composition" or "system" or indeed even just "text". But Maheśvarānanda is completely explicit about the generic status of his work; as his closing revelation-narrative attests, as do other references scattered throughout, he means by this precisely that he was creating a work of revelation, the sort of text whose transformations we have been tracing. The contrast here with both Veṅkaṭanātha and Śāradātanaya is stark, and instructive. Veṅkaṭanātha borrowed from the methods of his anonymous Pāñcarātrika forebears, just as he appears to have borrowed from a tradition, now mostly lost, of Vaiṣṇava textual criticism. But he did so in order to buttress the claims to validity of a stable canon of scriptures; where a human hand could be detected in these, one needed to be careful. Maheśvarānanda, secure in his illuminationist access to reality, evidently saw no difficulty in asserting himself as a Tantric author: gate-crashing the canon instead of policing it. Maheśvarānanda's creation of new revelation might be understood to be similar to Śāradātanaya's penchant for literary invention and the con-

tantra's revelation, lofty in its esoteric nature, will now be narrated: anyone here on earth hearing it attains complete self-awareness."

fection of missing sources. Though the two men shared an interest in poetic theory, the distance between them is considerable. Compared to the ingenuous way that Śāradātanaya went about remounting the pedestrian style and didactic longueurs of the *tantras* and *purāṇas*, Maheśvarānanda's work is a highly creative, virtuoso appropriation of their methods. In the *Mahārthamañjarī*, the reader encounters over and over recognizable variations on the tools of the anonymous philology, transformed in the hands of a singular literary intelligence. Ranging over grammar, belles-lettres and poetics, and grounded in his extensive learning in the most antinomian of the Tantric traditions of goddess-worship, the *Mahārthamañjarī* is like nothing else in the literature which survives from this period. It exists at the confluence of much of what this book has sought to reconstruct; in the effort to make a novel kind of *tantra* by this now little-known author we have a remarkable case of the self-conscious adaptation of the modes of philology of the medieval Tamil country.

The Pleasures of the Text

Maheśvarānanda flourished around the turn of the fourteenth century.³ He was active in Cidambaram, in the same environs which had earlier seen the promulgation of the *Sūtasamhitā* and the *Pēriyapurāṇam*. By Maheśvarānanda's time, Cidambaram was a thriving autonomous temple-city, a parallel Śaiva universe to Veṅkaṭanātha's Śrīraṅgam. Śāstric authors had long had the habit of producing a running commentary on their own versified root-text. This was especially the case in *alaṃkāraśāstra*, as it had been revolutionized in Kashmir from the middle of the ninth century, and Maheśvarānanda certainly had this model in mind. Yet there is something more at work in the duplex root text-and-commentary format of the *Mahārthamañjarī*, which sets it out from the available models of philosophical or doctrinal writing. This difference is referenced in the opening verses to the *Parimala*; already there, the reader can detect something of the philological impulse that is at work in the text. The commentary begins with a customary invocation to Gaṇeśa, the lord of obstacles (in a cryptic verse that is likely an interpolation), and proceeds to pay homage over a number of verses to the philosophical principles of Maheśvarānanda's system,

3 See Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner*, ed. by Dominic Goodall and André Padoux (Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie, 2007), 412–416; he concludes that Maheśvarānanda "will have been active c. 1275–1325."

to its mythic founders, and to his tradition and immediate teachers. After announcing his own civil name—Gorakṣa, son of Mādhava—and his initiate's title, he writes:⁴

Though it be my own work, I myself now undertake the commentary upon it, eager to repeat yet again the consummation of my own undertaking.

It is true that this effort is taken up here for the sake of the delight that it will bring to the minds of those in need of instruction—but let this be put aside. May this work, which has a particular brilliance through its brief and lengthy expositions, be a flower-offering, made of language, to Śiva.

Compared to the literary fireworks that began Veṅkaṭanātha's *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, these two verses are much more modest. The passing note of apologia that begins the first of these—when self-commentary was a widely accepted intellectual habit—signals at the outset the self-consciousness that is Maheśvarānanda's most distinctive feature as a thinker and writer. Also characteristic is the image of the scholarly author as a hedonist of language: when he speaks of himself as 'eager to repeat the consummation' of his own text, he is drawing quite knowingly on the vocabulary of erotic poetry: Sanskrit *sambhoga* possesses exactly the nuances of English's 'consummation'. The loving attention to language—philology—is shown here to be a form of satisfaction even, or perhaps especially so, when the language is one's own.

The intertwining of pleasure and scholarship carries through into the next verse, which figures the work as a handful of flowers scattered before the feet of an honored guest, in this case Śiva. Again, there is the pleasurable, even sensual quality attributed to a work of Sanskrit theology. This metaphor tells us something significant about both the means and ends of Maheśvarānanda's work: this is something that is more than the sum of its parts, just as a cluster of flowers has a beauty above and beyond its constituents. Further, this is a work that is *vineyajanacamatkriyārtham*, intended to evoke a sense of delighted wonder in the minds of its audience, those in need of its salvific knowledge. The *Mañjarī* is thus dedicated to instruction through a certain sort of pleasure, a pleasure above all of language itself. The sort of language matters, too: in referring

4 *Mañjarī*, 1–2: *svakriyāyā api vyākhyāṃ svayam eva prayuñjmahe | upary apy ātmasaṃrambha-sambhogāmreḍanotsukāḥ || yad vā vineyajanacittacamatkriyārthaṃ atrodyamo 'yam udito 'stu tad evāstām | saṃkṣepavistatavibhāgaviviktaśobhaḥ puṣpāñjalir bhavatu vāṇmayā eṣa śambhoḥ ||* On the possibly spurious nature of the opening *mañgalācaraṇa*, *namo nālayate śuṇḍāṃ*, etc., see Cox, "Making a tantra in medieval South India," 264–265n.

to *saṃkṣepavistaravibhāga*, “brief and lengthy expositions”, Maheśvarānanda directly refers to a scholarly convention, the ability of a master of a given *śāstra* to teach it pithily or dilate on its intricacies.

As we have seen, Maheśvarānanda attributes the decision to compose the root-text of the *Mañjarī* in Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit, which is not usually a medium of scholarship, to a dream encounter with a *siddhayoginī*, a Śaiva demi-goddess who addressed him in that language as he was in the midst of a midnight ritual.⁵ Interpretative charity insists that we take this claim seriously, but dreams are after all built up and interpreted out of ready-to-hand cultural materials, and this dream in particular situates its dreamer within multiple intersecting contexts of intelligibility. These contexts in turn can help us to understand Maheśvarānanda's waking life as an author and scholar. Most immediately, the dream-*yoginī*'s language choice places the work within the longer history of his Krama-Mahārtha tradition of Śaiva goddess-worshippers, and the several surviving works of this system composed in languages other than Sanskrit. But it is unclear whether Maheśvarānanda had direct access to any of these: the extant works were composed in Old Kashmiri—most of the Krama literature was a product of the far Northwest—and do not appear to have had a wide dissemination.⁶ These vernacular compositions, with their artfully artless language, were appropriate to the subitist soteriology embodied in one tendency of the Krama's doctrine, suggesting a sudden, unbidden irruption of enlightened consciousness unmediated by the linguistic disciplines of Sanskrit. But while he invokes this rhetoric at various points in his presentation, Maheśvarānanda's theological aesthetics in the *Mahārthamañjarī* differ markedly, as we shall see.

For all that Maheśvarānanda's visionary encounter possessed earlier models within his own lineage tradition, it was also a part of a much wider network of narratives from across southern Asia, in which a feminine figure arrives in

5 Besides the closing passage in verse with which the chapter began, this demi-goddess appears in the *Parimala*'s twelfth introductory verse (*Mañjarī*, 2, but reading *svocita-* for the edition's *svāpita-* [see Cox, “Making a tantra,” 269]), and in the *Mañjarī*'s seventy-first and final Prakrit verses (184, see fn. 36 below).

6 On the surviving texts, the *Mahānayaparakāśa* attributed to Śitikanṭha, the *Chommāsaṃketaparakāśa* of Nīṣkriyānandanātha and the anonymous *Triṃśaccarcārahasya* (transmitted within the latter) see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 299–307 and 333–344. A similar habit of the Śaiva use of Middle Indic can be seen in Apabhraṃśa verses included in Abhinavagupta's *Tantrasāra*: these are corrupt in the text's edition; see H.C. Bhayani, “The Apabhraṃśa passages in Abhinavagupta's *Tantrasāra* and *Parātriṃśikāvṛtti*,” *Vidyā* 14, no. 2 (1971) for a convincing reconstruction.

a dream to endow or to incite the creation of a new text. Just such a dream inspired the ninth century Kashmirian poet and critic Ānandavardhana to compose his *Devīśataka*, and these visionary meetings became the core narrative element in the massive corpus of Tibetan revelations called *gter ma* or ‘treasures,’ offering a series of striking parallels to Maheśvarānanda’s story, in which goddess figures—there called *ḍākinīs* as opposed to Maheśvara’s *yoginī*—transmit scriptural texts through both mysterious language and significant gestures.⁷

Maheśvarānanda was certainly a voracious and self-conscious consumer of Kashmirian Sanskrit, and his work provides one of the strongest attestations of the southern domestication of the Valley’s textual exports in this period, and this domestication involved a great deal of demanding philological labor. Alongside the Tantric corpora that were most evidently influential upon the *Mahārthamañjarī*, the signature Kashmirian discipline of *alamkāraśāstra* or poetics was a formative influence upon Maheśvarānanda. Significantly, works in this discipline frequently had recourse to proof-texts drawn from Māhārāṣṭrī erotic lyrics.⁸ Thus one way to approach the unusual form of the work is to see it as a creative fusion of two different textual precursors, both emanating from Kashmir: on the one hand, there is the visionary tradition of transformative encounters with a radically unpredictable feminized divine; on the other the long habit of adventurous literary interpretation based on Prakrit’s built-in semantic ambiguities.

This juxtaposition—in which sources with the most reputable high śāstric pedigree and the influence of the esoteric visionary Tantric subculture are mixed together—suggests the wider tenor of Maheśvarānanda’s writing and thinking. When he wished to do so, Maheśvarānanda was perfectly capable of producing normative scholarship, often at a very high level. Every page of the *Parimala* is a tribute to his extensive reading in the Śaiva literature of Kashmir. Maheśvarānanda could be a meticulous critic and textual historian, as when, in his central presentation of the meditation-liturgy on the cycles of the Krama goddesses, he unobtrusively but definitively draws attention to the relationship

7 On the *Devīśataka*, see Ingalls, “Ānandavardhana’s *Devīśataka*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 4 (1989): 565–575; on the Tibetan treasure tradition, see Janet Gyatso, “Signs, Memory, and History: A Tantric Buddhist theory of scriptural transmission,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 9, no. 2 (1986): 7–35; and eadem, “Genre, Authorship and Transmission in Visionary Buddhism: The Literary Traditions of Thang-stong rGyal-po,” in *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*, ed. Ronald M. Davidson and Steven D. Goodman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

8 See Cox, “Saffron in the *rasam*,” especially 188–193.

of textual dependence between the *Mahānayaprakāśa* of Arṇasimha and the *Cidgaganacandrikā* of Śrīvatsa, establishing a filiation that modern scholarship has gone on to verify.⁹

But Maheśvarānanda's intentions in the *Mahārthamañjarī* lie in a great many ways outside the ambit of conventional textual scholarship. The contrast with Veṅkaṭanātha is instructive. In his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, the Vaiṣṇava sought to craft a rational presentation of his religion's revealed texts; the Śākta Śaiva Maheśvarānanda crafted his sole surviving work as a *participant* in his own religion's scriptural canon. Veṅkaṭanātha proved ultimately willing to acknowledge the human authorship of certain parts of his canon, and to disparage the authority of the scriptures of his doctrinal opponents on the same grounds; Maheśvarānanda embraced the textual proliferation that had transformed the worlds of the Southern theists for at least the preceding two centuries by the creation and circulation of his own *tantra*. In presenting the *Mahārthamañjarī* as a piece of revelation, on a par with the many anonymous works that were confected in the South up to and including his own time, he explicitly declared his intention to create a novel textual object. Although a great deal was made to pass for scripture within Maheśvara's world of tantric Śaivism, to claim this status for a text crafted on the model of a Prakrit literary anthology and glossed at length in recondite Sanskrit prose—in which Maheśvara's voice of the text's human author is constantly asserting itself—is unusual enough to seem to constitute a category error.

The self-styled *tantrakṛt* sets up the expectation of his text's novelty in its very first words. In the opening prose of the *Parimala*, the paired techniques of textual incorporation and bibliographic articulation—what we have seen were the principal tools of the anonymous philology—are clearly at work:

Here begins this great scripture entitled *The Flower-Cluster of the Great Purpose*, which has been undertaken in order to explain the method whereby one may reflect on God as nondifferent from the real nature of individual identity; in terms of its content, in line with the conclusion by tentative admission, it contains the five parts of a syllogism, beginning with the major proposition; in it, there are seventy lyric verses serving as *sūtras*.¹⁰

9 *Mañjarī*, 98, citing *Mahānayaprakāśa* 46cd–47ab and *Cidgaganacandrikā* 108; the wider evidence for the relationship between the two texts is set out in Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 297, esp. n. 205.

10 *Mañjarī*, 2: *atha yad etad ātmasvarūpāvibhinna-parameśvaraparāmarśopāyapratipādana-*

First of all, in speaking here of “the conclusion by tentative admission” (*abhyupagamasiddhānta*), Maheśvarānanda gestures towards the canonical authority of the *Nyāyasūtra* (1.1.31) and its commentaries.¹¹ What is tentatively admitted here is not directly stated, though it is likely to be the pretheorized sense of the world in its seeming duality, that which Maheśvarānanda means to overcome in the course of his work.¹² But this appeal to the orthodox system of logic as a shared repository of philosophical common sense, which is analogous to the opening of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, is tangential to Maheśvarānanda’s central claim here. He declares that the *Mañjarī*—a text, as he here obliquely admits, that formally is akin to a short anthology of erotic verse¹³—should be understood at once as a major work of scripture (*mahat tantram*) and as possessing a syllogistic structure. This latter claim derives from an unacknowledged borrowing from the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, Abhinavagupta’s learned and influential commentary on the work of Utpaladeva, where its root-text is characterized identically as containing the five parts of a classical syllogism.¹⁴

*pravṛttam abhyupagamasiddhāntasthityā tātparyataḥ pratijñādyavayavaṇcākātma-
kaṃ mahārthamañjaryāhvayaṃ mahat tantram atra sūtrāyamānā gāthāḥ saptatir bha-
vanti.*

- 11 *aparikṣitābhyupagamāt tadviśeṣaparikṣaṇam abhyupagamasiddhāntaḥ*, “The conclusion by tentative admission is the examination, based on the tentative admission of something that is not itself examined, of the particular features of that thing.” In the *Nyāyabhāṣya* ad loc, Vātsyāyana explains that this term labels those axioms implicitly accepted within a *śāstra*, which go without saying in its fundamental text, for example the acceptance of the internal organ of attention (*manas*) by the Naiyāyikas.
- 12 Maheśvarānanda returns to this theme in one of the *Parimala*’s finer passages (45–47) where, adopting the dialectical style of opponent and *siddhāntin*, he stages a debate on just this topic, the apparent teeming dualisms of everyday experience, while splitting the argumentative voice of his own text. This is discussed in Cox, “Making a tantra,” 141–144 (the passage is reedited *ibid.*, 313–315 and translated, 361–365).
- 13 The fact that the text contains seventy *āryā* verses itself suggests the model of the foundational work of Māhārāṣṭrī courtly poetry, the *Gāhāsattasāi* (Seven Hundred Lyrics) attributed to the Sātavāhana king Hāla: see now Andrew Ollett, “Language of the Snakes: Prakrit, Sanskrit and the Language Order of Premodern India” (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2015), 75–100.
- 14 *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, 24ff.: *evaṃ pratijñātavayasamastavastusaṃgrahanena idaṃ vākyam uddeśarūpaṃ pratijñāpiṇḍātmakaṃ ca, madhyagranthas tu hetvādinirūpakāḥ ’iti prakāṣito mayā’* (= 4.3.16) *iti cāntyaśloko nigamanagrantha iti evaṃ pañcāvayavātmakam idaṃ śāstram paravyutpattiphalam*, ‘So, through the inclusion of all of the elements that are to be maintained [in the course of the work], this utterance serves both as an indicatory statement [of the contents of the work] as well as a major proposition. Further, the central

But Abhinava's commentary pointedly pertains to the domain of a *śāstra*, and not a scriptural work, and Maheśvara's repurposing of his language here in the service of describing his own text relies on a studied homage to the scriptures' own self-characterization. In two widely cited examples of what exactly makes up a *mahātāntra*, earlier tantric authors had recourse to numerical sets, in a way which parallels Maheśvarānanda's claim that his work instantiated the five parts of logician's proof. The *Mṛgendra*, for instance, declares 'a great scripture contains the three fundamental categories and is divided into four topics,' while the opening of the *Svacchandatantra* declares 'a great scripture [contains] the four thrones.'¹⁵ These enumerative definitions seem to have provided the ground for Maheśvarānanda to effect his *mélange* of the genre of scripture with the philosophical-dialectical contents of his complex text.

Ambiguity and Auto-Philology

The explicit decision to frame the *Mahārthamañjarī* as a part of the library of Śaiva *tantras* is only the first of Maheśvarānanda's philological gambits. The text's bilingual form—Prakrit root verses and extensive Sanskrit gloss—is perhaps his most thoroughgoing. As we have seen, strong precedents existed within his Śaiva tantric milieu for the use of speech-forms other than classical Sanskrit, above all a connection between the supposedly simpler, more direct idioms and the sudden irruption of liberated consciousness that is a hallmark of its nondualist currents. But in adopting Māhārāṣṭrī, the preeminent language

portions of the text include the adduced reason [as well as the other two middle terms, the example (*udāharaṇa*) and its application (*upanayana*)], while the final verse, in declaring 'thus I have revealed it' supplies the concluding term. Thus this work **consists of a five membered syllogism**, one that is directed towards the instruction of others.' On the importance of this passage to the epistemological and argumentative presuppositions of Abhinava's interpretation of the Pratyabhijñā, see Isabelle Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre. Identité, différence et altérité dans la philosophie de la Pratyabhijñā* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 20–23, and especially the further parallels cited in nn. 39 and 40 there.

- 15 *Mṛgendratāntra*, *vidyāpāda*, 2.2ab *tripadārthaṃ catuṣpādaṃ mahātāntram*; *Svacchandatantra* 1.5c *catuṣpīṭhaṃ mahātāntram*; according to Kṣemarāja (ad loc.), these *pīṭhas* are those of *mantra*, *vidyā*, *maṇḍala*, and *mudrā*. The latter is a work which was well-known to Maheśvarānanda: he gives labelled quotations of the text six times in the *Parimala*, while evincing familiarity with it elsewhere (see Whitney Cox, "A South Indian Śākta Anthropogony: An Annotated Translation of Selections from Maheśvarānanda's *Mahārthamañjarīparimala*, gāthās 19 and 20," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40, no. (2012b): esp. nn. 29 and 42).

of ambiguously erotic verse beloved of the literary-critical avant garde, Maheśvarānanda was not choosing a language with a claim to being ready-to-hand. In taking this particular literary language as his medium, the Śaiva *tāntrika* links himself with a wider philological turn towards the antiquarian study of Prakrit that had been on the rise in the far South from the early thirteenth century. The outstanding figure here is the grammarian Trivikrama, who likely composed his comprehensive Prakrit grammar, complete with lexicographic appendix and extensive literary citations, in the southern Kannada country sometime in the early decades of that century.¹⁶ Trivikrama's work, in contrast to his major source, the grammar of the twelfth century polymath Hemacandra, achieved a wide circulation beyond Jaina circles. This can be seen by its use as the main reference text in the *Bhāvadīpikā*, the commentary on a selection of verses drawn from *Sattasāi* attributed to the Andhra king Vemabhūpāla (r. ca. 1403–1420). Veṅkaṭanātha also participated in this minority philological trend, composing a devotional sequence, the *Acyutaśataka*, in Māhārāṣṭrī.¹⁷

Maheśvarānanda's work contains no direct references to any grammatical authority, so it is not clear if he himself drew upon Trivikrama or some other work. Judging from the *gāthās'* lexis and their relatively simple style, Maheśvarānanda did not possess the suppleness with Prakrit that he did with Sanskrit: he presumably crafted his root-verses through the mediation of one of these texts, which were mainly bodies of rules, themselves composed in Sanskrit, for transforming Sanskrit into Prakrit (and *vice versa*). Even though the root-text of the *Mahārthamañjarī* has no claim to real literary merit, it is worth lingering over the details of how Maheśvarānanda made use of his Prakrit medium. The relationship between the root-text and the auto-commentary opens up a space where the distinctive feature of Maheśvarānanda's writing and thought can be seen at work. This feature might best be described as a sort of auto-philology, where the inspiration and the methods of the anonymous tantric authors were joined to the tools of literary criticism, discourse analysis, and the methods of Prakrit grammar. This auto-philology is staged in the service of a productive contradiction at the heart of the work: Maheśvara affirms the immediacy of the understanding his work offers, while he himself

16 On this date and location, see A.N. Upadhye, "A Note on Trivikrama's Date," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 13, part 2 (1932): 171–172, who identified a funerary inscription of a co-pupil of Trivikrama found at Halebid dated to 1236 CE.

17 This is discussed in Steven Hopkins, *Singing the body of God: the hymns of Vedāntadeśika in their South Indian tradition* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), 215–231 and translated in full (with useful annotation) in idem, *An Ornament for Jewels: Love poems for the Lord of Gods by Vedāntadeśika* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73–103.

persistently seeks to interrupt the very process of understanding through interpretative puzzles and idiosyncratic modes of interpretation.

Throughout the *Parimala*, these interruptions depend on the Prakrit medium itself, on its pliant capacity to allow multiple simultaneous meanings. An example of this linguistically-grounded exegetical misdirection can be seen early in the commentary, in the remarks on the *Mañjarī*'s fourth *gāthā*. Taking up the paradoxical theme of the radical availability of the text's esoteric teaching, Maheśvara presents his audience with a verse that supports more than one interpretation, the plurality of whose meaning depends on the Prakrit medium. The Māhārāṣṭrī base-text reads:

jaṃ jāṇamti jaḷā api jaḷahārīo pi jaṃ vijāṇamti |
jassa ccia jukkāro so kassa phuḍo ṇa hoi kuḷanāho ||

This appears at first to yield the following translation:

Even the slow-witted know him, and even water-bearers understand him;
 reverence is to him alone: for whom is the lord of the *kula* not manifest?

The commentary here merits quoting at length:¹⁸

Even 'the slow-witted,' such as the Ābhīras, in whom the light of consciousness is barely evident, know him to be universally present. [They know this] as if they were Heroic Masters, who are nothing but the Light. And even such people as pot-carrying serving-women, who possess only a

18 Text as constituted in Cox, "Making a tantra," 213–214, with departures from the printed edition as indicated in the apparatus there: *yaṃ vaiśvātmīyena prasiddhimantaṃ prakāśāt-māno vīreśvarā ivānudriktaprakāśā jaḍā ābhīrādayo 'pi jānanti, yaṃ ca vimarśamayyo vīreśvarya iva vaidagdhyaḥbhasaśālīnyo ghaṭadāsīprabhṛtayo 'py avabudhyante. sarveṣāṃ api sthūlo 'haṃ sampanno 'haṃ ityādeḥ svātmasphuraṇasya sphuṭam evopalabhyamānatvāt. yac chrutiḥ: 'utainaṃ gopā adṛśan adṛśann udahārya' [= Śatarudrīya, 1.8] iti. vimarśaprādhānyāj jalahārījñānaṃ prati vaiśiṣṭyam uktam. jñānaśaktiyeva pramātṛjñāṃ kriyāśaktiāpy ayam kroḍīkriyā ity āha 'yasyaiva namaskāra' iti. jaḍajalahāryādir hi sarvo 'pi jīva Vargas tattatphalakāṅkṣayā tatra tatra namaskurvāṇo lakṣyate. sa sarvo 'pi namaskāro yatsambandhenaiva bhavati. yathā śrutiḥ: 'yasmai namas tacchira' iti. [...] atha ca jaḍāḥ stambhakumbhādayo bhāvā jaḍahāryaḥ śabdasparsādyādānakṣamā indriyaśaktayas te 'pi yaṃ jānanti parameśvarasya prākṛtyotkarṣa upapādyate. yataḥ stambhakumbhādayo 'pi tattatpramātṛviśayikāradvārā jñānakriyāśrayatayā niścīyante.*

semblance of sophistication, comprehend him as if they were the Heroic Ladies, consisting of self-reflection. This is because the awareness of one's own self—for instance, thinking “I am fat”, or “I am fortunate”—is perceived directly by all people. It is as it says in the Veda: “*The cowherds saw him, the water-girls saw him.*” An exceptional quality was attributed to the awareness of the water carrying women because of their especially prominent power of self-reflection.

Percipients can take him in through their faculty of action as well as through their faculty of awareness and for this reason he says, “Reverence is to him alone.” In fact, any living creature, be they slow-witted man, water-girl or what have you, can be seen to do reverence to someone or other, with the anticipation of garnering some reward. But every act of reverence relates to him alone, as in the Vedic text: “[He is] the head of that one to whom reverence is done.” [...]

And further, the ‘insensate’ are objects, such as pillars and pots, and the ‘bearers of the insensate’ are the powers of the senses, adept at taking up sounds, tactile sensations, and so forth. These also ‘know him’: thus the Lord’s absolute self-evidence is propounded, since even such things as pillars and pots can act as the support for activity and awareness, by virtue of their objectification by various percipients.

There is a lot going on in what seems at first glance to be a wildly discordant piece of text, in which people, things, and abstractions appear to be juxtaposed in a chaos of confused reference. To begin at the simplest level: Maheśvara asserts that all people have potential access to the reality of Śiva (called *kulanātha*, “lord of the clan” in the verse). The examples he picks—proverbially simple-minded figures like the Ābhīra-cowherds and serving girls—seem drawn from the repertoire of the Māhārāṣṭrī literature, set in an imagined world of rural idyll. But this gesture towards the world of the *Sattasāi* is doubled by the quotation of the ancient Vedic hymn to Śiva, the *Śatarudrīya*, which speaks of exactly these same figures, cowherds and girls bearing water. Here for the first time (but not for the last) Maheśvara’s auto-commentary expressly cites the source from which his verse draws its inspiration, pulling back a bit of the curtain on his own composition.

But the most extraordinary part of this important passage comes in the sudden metamorphosis of cowherd and servant-girl into object and faculty of sense. It is a hallmark of Maheśvara’s Krama system that the ongoing process of sensory cognition can be understood according to the phenomenological analysis embedded within its contemplative liturgy: for the Krama adept, every act of perceptual cognition enacts the structure of his ritual mediation.

Here, early in the *Parimala*, before the Krama liturgy has been disclosed in any detail, Maheśvara stages a version of that ontological intuition through a specific, linguistically-mediated means. *Jaḷā* in the Prakrit root-verse can refer to either persons ('the dull-witted') or things ('the insensate,' this equivocation is also present in the Sanskrit *jaḍāḥ*), while Prakrit *jaḷahārio* can at once mean (feminine) 'bearer of water' or (feminine) 'bearer of the insensate,' the (grammatically feminine) *indriyaśaktis*, the powers or capacities of the sense organs. Thus the simple phonetic collapse of the two Sanskrit phonemes *ḍa* and *la* into Prakrit *ḷa* internalizes the meaning of the *Mahārthamañjarī* and its Vedic precursor.

This is a slight example. For one thing, the phonetic phenomenon seen here is not exclusive to Prakrit, as Sanskrit poets and commentators both invoke the pragmatic identity of *ḍa* and *la* in speech as a basis for adventitious puns. But the location of this auto-interpretation at the outset of the *Mahārthamañjarī* is telling: it follows close upon what look to be eulogies to Maheśvarānanda's guru Mahāprakāśa contained in the *Mañjarī*'s two opening verses, but which the *Parimala* explains as a series of complex ontological and phenomenological arguments, through a series of vertiginous commentarial operations, pointedly ignoring the verses' patent meanings.¹⁹ This turn to polysemy mediated through the verse's Prakrit medium, then, is meant to serve as a final section to the work's overture, an advertisement of the linguistic ingenuity which the reader can expect from the *Parimala*'s unpacking of its root-text's meaning. As the text progresses, this grows more and more complex, culminating in a remarkable set-piece reading of the *Mañjarī*'s fifty-sixth verse, whose second half, Maheśvarānanda tells his readers, can simultaneously yield three different transpositions into Sanskrit, describing three hierarchically ranked intentional states leading ultimately to liberation.²⁰ These interpretative operations work to establish hidden connections, identifications, and metamorphoses both as sort of entertaining linguistic play and as an enactment of what for Maheśvarānanda is the protean and pliant nature of the world of our experience. And throughout, these depend on his invocation of the battery of techniques—

19 These are described in Cox, "Making a tantra," 205–213.

20 This set-piece is explained in Cox, "Making a tantra," 218ff.: Maheśvarānanda's explanation for its underlying mechanism is *prākṛtabhāṣāprābalyāt tantreṇoktam*, "this is taught through a construal of the meaning [*tantreṇa*], owing to the capacity of the Prakrit language." Here, his methods are evidently assimilable to the wider literary phenomenon of *śleṣa* or multiple-meaning poetry: refer to Bronner's exemplary study (Yigal Bronner, *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)).

grammatical derivation, etymological analysis, the citation of parallels and proof-texts—that form the methods of the conventional commentary, re-deployed to Maheśvarānanda's own purposes.

But the most significant detail of Maheśvarānanda's auto-philology is the self-reflection that it provokes. This can be seen in the unique apologia that he appends to the *Mañjarī*'s conclusion. The seventy-first and final verse of the root-text stands apart from the rest of the work: written in a much longer meter, it is encomiastic and descriptive, instead of doctrinal, returning the reader to the dream-encounter that was the work's inception:

*itthaṃ pāḍasuttasattaśaisamullās'ēkkasaṃdhāṇiṃ
jaggattakkhaṇaṇivisesasaviṇ'oiṇṇaṃ paiṇṇottaraṃ |
lo'ullaṇḥanaajōggasiddhipaavīpatthāṇabaddh'ujjamaṃ
kanthāsūlakapālamēttavihavaṃ vandāmi taṃ joiṇiṃ ||*

Thus I do honor to that *yoginī* who, entirely focused upon the creation of this work in seventy Prakrit *sūtras*, appeared as dream and waking became one; who, with total devotion to her vows, set her efforts upon the laying-out of the path that leads to the perfection suited to world-transcendence, whose only possessions are her ascetic's cloak, trident, and skull-bowl.

It is as he proceeds through this verse word by word that Maheśvarānanda gives his most sustained and surprising description of what the now-completed text has been about:

prākṛta: Sanskrit is in fact the basis of any other speech-form. That which has arisen from the basis of that [other speech-form], that is from Sanskrit, is [called] Prakrit. In this way one may acknowledge the ingenuity that goes into the construction of the derivative (that is, the other language), while at the same time retaining familiarity with the excellence of its basis. Thus, in both ways it is evident that [Prakrit] is suitable for evoking a sense of delighted wonder. One might object 'Now, in both the revealed texts (e.g. "one ought not speak barbarously, one ought not speak incorrectly") and the traditional texts (e.g. "in such arenas as the sacrifice, one should never speak barbarously") the use of a speech-form other than Sanskrit is forbidden, as it consists of *apabhraṃśa*, corrupt language. After all, any other speech-form by virtue of its difference from Sanskrit is *apabhraṃśa*, degenerate speech. It is for this reason that it is said that, "In learned writing, anything other than Sanskrit is said to be *apabhraṃśa*"'

Such an objection is incorrect. Leaving aside the reflection upon God and one's true self, a word is *apabhraṃśa* when, like a tender flower-bud that has fallen into the mud, it is debased in the reflection on, for instance, the *camasa*-dish or the *caṣāla*-ring. But the other kind of word, even though it be stained by some language or another, is as much a source of excellence as the syllables of a *mantra*.²¹

Maheśvarānanda begins conventionally enough, with a typical and widely-cited interpretation of the name 'Prakrit.' The language used in the *gāthās* does not represent some radically different means of verbal communication; rather, it is a code that is fundamentally based on Sanskrit.²² Maheśvarānanda adds to this the idea of a specific aesthetic or textural effect peculiar to Prakrit, an effect that is only apparent through the lens of the properly cultivated knowledge of the prototype language. We may recognize in this a certain realism, as Maheśvarānanda or any of his potential readers' understanding of Māhārāṣṭrī would necessarily have been mediated through grammatical literature written in Sanskrit.²³

Instead, Maheśvara's choice of medium rests on its potential to express something that is beyond the connotative powers of Sanskrit acting by itself, while necessarily bound up in that timeless, placeless standard of learned cul-

21 Text as constituted in Cox, "Making a Tantra," 187, with the exception of accepting the earlier edition's *apabhraṃśātmakatvāc ca: prākṛteti. saṃskṛtaṃ hi prakṛtir aśeṣasya bhāṣāntarasya. tatprākṛteḥ saṃskṛtād utpannam prākṛtam ity anena bhāṣāntarātmakavikṛti-śilpavidagdhyasvīkāraḥ prakṛtisauṣṭhavaparicayāparityāgaś cety ubhayathā camatkāraucityam āsūcyate. nanu 'na mlecchitavai nāpabhāṣitavai' 'na mlecchitavyam yajñādāv' (= Mahābhāṣya, Paspasāhnikā, p. 2) iti śrutismṛtibhyāṃ saṃskṛtavatiriktabhāṣā prayojyatāyāṃ pratiśidhyate. apabhraṃśātmakatvāt tasyāḥ. saṃskṛtavatirekenānyā sarvāpi bhāṣā hy apabhraṃśa iti. 'śāstreṣu saṃskṛtād anyad apabhraṃśatayocyate' (= Kāvyaḍarśa 1.36cd) ity ucyata iti cen na. svātmaparameśvaraparāmarśam apahāyānyatra camasacaṣā-lādīparyālocane bhraṣyan paṅkilasthalaskhalitakusumakisalayasthānīyaḥ śabdo 'pabhraṃśaḥ. anyādrśas tu yatkiñcidbhāṣoparūṣito 'pi mantrākṣaravad atyantasaṃskṛtavyaspadam.*

22 Compare here the opinions gathered together in Kahrs' carefully argued essay (Eivind Kahrs, "What is a *tadbhava* word?" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35 (1992): 225–249). Much of our understanding of the literary-historical hermeneutics of Prakrit literature is to be reconsidered in light of Ollett's brilliant dissertation ("Language of the Snakes").

23 See here David Seyfort Ruegg, "Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *saṃdhā*, *saṃdhi*, *saṃdhyā*, and *abhisamdhi*," in *Dialectes dans les Littératures Indo-Aryennes*, ed. Collette Caillat (Paris: Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1989), 320 ff. discussing this passage.

ture as a presumed substratum of his audience's understanding. Maheśvarānanda then turns to the dialectic method of *śāstra*, putting the objection to the medium of his work in the mouth of an imagined opponent. The objection depends on whether Prakrit must be considered *apabhraṃśa*, corrupt or degenerate language. This is a notion, as Maheśvara reminds his readers, that is supported by two impeccable authorities: the testimony of authoritative brahmanical scriptures that were mediated through their citation by the arch-grammarian Patañjali, and the great literary critic Daṇḍin's injunction in his *Kāvyādarśa* that systematic thought is exclusively the preserve of Sanskrit. Rather than seeking to impugn the testimony of these *loci classici*, Maheśvarānanda flips their value judgment on its head: a word may certainly be said to be corrupt if it is abused through use in adjudicating such trivia as the details of the orthodox sacrificial cult (the *camasa*-cup and *caṣaka*-ring are a part of the equipment of Vedic ritual).

This defense of the form of the *Mahārthamañjarī* thus rests on two distinct points. Prakrit possesses a glamour that derives from being different from but subsumable to Sanskrit. This aesthetic argument is somewhat at odds with the second point about the significance of the subject matter of the work. The text is supposed to communicate the understanding of the real nature of things and the means to attain and render certain this understanding. All question of the particular fitness of Prakrit is left aside; it is simply important that we speak of it at all, especially when compared to the degrading, trivializing misuse of language that we see elsewhere in the world. Philology, even something as abstruse as Prakrit philology, must be directed towards some final end.

For Maheśvara the autocommentator, what is really useful about the Prakrit medium is its indeterminacy. When seen with an eye or heard by an ear attuned to Sanskrit, it does not so much obscure its final meaning as leave its interpretation open, at least initially. The *Parimala*, he goes on to assert, is thus an indispensable supplement to the verses, as it unpacks and regiments the proliferation of meaning that Prakrit allows. This is not, as we have already seen, simply because the Sanskrit autocommentary provides a single authoritative interpretation: indeed, Maheśvara implies by his practice as an auto-commentator that his *gāthās* admit of multiple interpretations because he would have his readers know the world itself to be equally indeterminate, to be subject to perspective. It is only through the gradual refinement of our vision that we may arrive at a final understanding, an understanding that allows for the world's many partial meanings within itself.

But to put things so directly overshoots the present context and sells short Maheśvara's subtlety. It also draws us away from what is perhaps the most important and certainly the most jarring moment in the entire passage, when

Maheśvarānanda characteristically recurs to the same point with markedly different effect. Atypically, Maheśvarānanda gives the lemma *pāaḍa*, the verse's Prakrit rendering of the name 'Prakrit': this is one of the handful of such cases in the *Parimala* where he gives the word in its original form, and not in its Sanskrit transformation.²⁴

The use of the form *pāaḍa* [*'Prakrit'], which due to its phonetic resonance can also yield [the Sanskrit word] 'manifest' [*prakaṭa*], implies that the *sūtras* do not contain a very great degree of non-apparent meaning, even though—being *sūtras*, after all—they are mainly meant only to hint at things.

We are told that, because of its phonetic alternation with *prakaṭa*, the Sanskrit word for 'manifest,' *pāaḍa* subtly communicates a limitation of the text's potential for polysemy. The word itself points the text's audience to a limit, a governing mechanism internal to the language. Here, at the very end of the text, we readers are assured that the text has operated all along within the scope of this inherent limit; Maheśvarānanda would have his readers believe that the ambiguity and polysemy of his Prakrit medium is governed by an underlying tendency to clarity. There's only one problem: in Prakrit, 'Prakrit' is not *pāaḍa*, or at least it is not supposed to be. In lexica, in grammars, and in classical literary sources, the word 'Prakrit' in Prakrit is *pāia* or *pāua*; *pāaḍa* certainly can be the equivalent to Sanskrit *prakaṭa*, for so it was already taught by in early grammatical literature and so it had been attested in classical literary sources.²⁵ The place of this anomaly as Maheśvarānanda's final flourish here seems especially egregious: he would have his readers believe the ambiguity of Prakrit to be governed by an underlying tendency to clarity, yet he would have us believe this through an appeal to a fact about the language which appears to be patently false.

24 Cox, "Making a tantra," 190 and *Mañjarī*, 186: *pāaḍety anenānurananaśaktyā prakaṭaśab-daparyāyena sūtrāṇāṃ sūcanaprādhānye 'pi nātyantam avyaktārthatety abhivyajyate*.

25 Bhāmaha cites and discusses the form *ad* Vararuci's *Prākṛtaprakāśa*, 1.2. The form is of sparing occurrence in the *Sattasāi*: *pāaḍa* itself I find only once in Hāla's anthology (vs. 473); similar forms occur as participles (vv. 199 and 460, *pāaḍia*–; 687 *pāaḍijjamṭe*) and as a finite verb (vs. 869, *pāaḍijjamṭi*); cf. the synonymous *paaḍei* (vs. 553), *paaḍamṭa* (vs. 406) and *paaḍia* (vs. 721); in the later and more learned *Setubandha* of Pravarasena, *pāaḍa* or *pāaḍia* occur some twenty-eight times (!). Ollett's dissertation ("Language of the Snakes," 125–126) includes a further attestation of the word in Jagadvallabha's *Vajjālagga*, and a brief discussion of the form.

But Maheśvarānanda's spurious Prakrit philology did not occur in a vacuum: *pāḍa* as "Prakrit" is not unique to him, but rather is a regional shibboleth, a form found in the far southern transmission of Māhārāṣṭrī texts. This same regional reading is defended in the commentary on a selection of *Sattasāi* verses attributed to the Reddi king Vemabhūpāla, which was composed in coastal Andhra perhaps two generations later. Vema explicitly discusses the reading *pāḍa* in his comments on the anthology's second and programmatic verse, going so far as to provide for the form's legitimacy, based on the authority of Trivikrama's grammar.²⁶ Much later, *pāḍa* would be the form adopted for the name of the language by the Keralan revivalists Rudradāsa and Rāmapāṇivāda. Evidently, it exerted a tenacious appeal on Southern authors and readers.²⁷

It is completely possible that Maheśvarānanda was simply being credulous in his adoption of this local malapropism, and that he simply went one step beyond his fellow southern Prakrit readers in offering a blundering explanation of it. Yet I suspect that Maheśvarānanda almost certainly knew of the form to be anomalous, and it was this that motivated his use of it in the first place. Aware of both the local shibboleth and the form established in classical literature, he seems to have used this errant form as a learned conundrum, a recondite 'easter egg.' This might seem trivial—a great deal of effort expended on the sort of word only a philologist could love. Yet Maheśvarānanda goes out of his way to draw attention to it, and to equate it with the 'correct' Prakrit-to-Sanskrit equivalence. This impulse appears of a piece with what was earlier described as Maheśvarānanda's linguistic hedonism, his desire above all else to take pleasure in the act of reading and composition. In fact, this whole gambit forms a kind of straight-faced philological joke made with completely

26 Cited *ad Saptasāisāra* vs. 2 [= *Sattasāi* 1.2], *pāḍakavvaṃ ity atra 'pratige 'pratīpage' iti ḍatvam*, citing Trivikrama 1.3.33. This rule is not a sure foundation on which to defend the form, as its governing conditions are highly variable: providing the necessary elements from earlier *sūtras*, it declares "*ta* becomes *ḍa* when the set of elements beginning with *prati* precedes it, excluding the set of words beginning with *pratīpa*." The grammar's auto-commentary proceeds to give a list of cases meeting that condition, as well as counterinstances, without ever specifying the two sets in question.

27 See Herman Tieken, "Hāla's *Sattasāi*: Stemma and Edition (Gāthās 1–50) with translation and notes" (PhD Dissertation, Leiden, 1983), 185–186 and the references cited there; I do not have an opinion as to Tieken's conjecture that the vector for the introduction of this shibboleth depends on the southern texts' ultimate dependence on a Jaina Nāgarī exemplar written by a scribe familiar with the Jain scriptural Prakrit Ardhamaṅgadhi and Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī: though the necessary sound change is present there, neither language shows a lexical equivalent.

serious intent. He was, I propose, completely sincere in his belief that his chosen medium allowed him to as it were directly manipulate the subjectivity of his reader: it is right there, integral to Prakrit itself. But in setting out this article of linguistic-ontological faith, he chose to create this verbal puzzle for his readers, as an argument through demonstration. In this tiny detail, he betrays just how great were the depths of his interpretative reflexivity, and his willingness to stage it for his readers for what he genuinely thought were salvific ends.

Writing, Reading, and the Hermeneutical *yogin*

There is much more to be said about this work, the abundance of whose intellectual energy and ambition is in inverse proportion to the attention it has received in modern scholarship. It would be possible to devote many pages to describing Maheśvarānanda's efforts to synthesize the difficult and dispersed scriptural corpus of the Krama and its cognate Tantric traditions, to detail his habits of citation or to describe his playful, learned style of Sanskrit prose. Instead, I will just focus on a single theme, which directly addresses the nature of Maheśvarānanda's philology. This is the explicit and remarkable linkage that he makes between textual study and his theory of liberation. Throughout the *Parimala*, we can see the impress of the literary theory of his time, particularly the theory of implicit meaning first described in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* and Abhinavagupta's *Locana* commentary. While other restatements or expansions of this theory had been promulgated before Maheśvarānanda's time, he is explicit that it is this early formulation that is especially influential upon him: "I was a navigator on the sea that is Literature," he writes, "once I has studied the *Kāvyāloka* and the *Locana*".²⁸ Abhinavagupta's works of tantric exegesis and non-dualist theology were models for Maheśvarānanda—and there is hardly a page of the *Parimala* that does not directly reflect the Kashmirian's profound influence—but the adaptation of his literary-theoretical thinking to the task of scriptural composition is evidence of his greatest debt to the Kashmirian master. This is part of the basic armature of the text: the Kashmirian poeticians had been drawn to the Māhārāṣṭrī *gāthā* literature as source material for their own exercises in virtuoso interpretation, and so Maheśvarānanda drew on the linguistic resources of the same language in his Prakrit root-

28 *Mañjarī* 195, *Kāvyāloka* and *Sahṛdayāloka* are both alternate titles of Ānandavardhana's text.

Maheśvarānanda introduces the main rubric by which he characterizes liberation in the *Parimala*, *naiścintyam*, the absence of fear or concern. This appears to be the only major innovation Maheśvara makes to his tradition's doctrine of enlightenment: *naiścintyam* is a term of art to which he returns repeatedly in his presentation, and it is one that none of his predecessors ever use.³² Given Maheśvarānanda's familiarity with poetic theory and the evident pride with which he refers to his own literary works,³³ it is significant that the one potential source for this usage (quite possibly the word's only prior attestation) is a verse found among the epigrams ascribed to Bhartṛhari in his *Vairāgyaśataka*:³⁴

A threadbare loincloth, falling into a hundred pieces,
an ascetic's cloak that's equally tattered,
fearless calm, eating without a care as to the food,
and a night's sleep in a burning ground,
wandering at will, without anything to driving you along, your
heart ever at peace, abiding in the celebration of yoga—if you
have this, what good is ruling all of creation?

32 Including references in the opening and closing *anukramaṇikās*, *naiścintya-* occurs ten times in the *Parimala* (3, 128, 154, 161 [three times], 163 [twice], 173, 194) Dwivedi unaccountably does not include it in his index of *viśiṣṭāḥ śabdāḥ* (135–149).

33 Cf. *Mañjarī* 70: *ataś ca śabdārthasāmarasyātmani sāhitye'py asmadāgrahaḥ pārameśvaro 'nugraha eva, yadanuprāṇanāḥ kuṇḍalābharaṇamukundakeliṣṭparimalaguḥākomalavallīstavanakhapralāpādayaḥ prabandhāḥ prakhyāyante*. “As a result, even my obsession with literary writing—where we find the complete fusion of word and meaning—is nothing other than divine favor; the compositions of mine that have found fame, including *The Earring*, *The Play of Kṛṣṇa*, *The Cave of Pleasure*, the *Hymn to Komalavallī* and the *Tell-tale Fingernail*, all take their inspiration from this.” None of these works survive, except for some quotations from the hymn in the *Parimala*; the odd name *parimalaguḥā* is queried in the MMP's edition, but is confirmed as the reading of Adyar Library ms. 72866 [A₁ in Cox, “Making a tantra”, f. 30^r, ll. 8–9 and ORI Mysore ms. E.40300B887 [M, *ibid.*], p. 196, ll. 2–4; these two MSS. also share the reading *kuṇḍalāraṁbhana* for ed.'s *-ābharaṇa*. With the exception of the *stava*, all of the titles suggest works of erotic poetry; this has influenced my translation of *nakhapralāpa* (in a more pious context it could, for example, also mean *A Discourse on the Claws [of Naraśiṃha?]*).

34 Vs. 91 in Rāmacandrabudhendra's recension: *kaupīnaṁ śatakaṇḍajarataramaṁ kanthā punas tādrśī naiścintyaṁ nirapekṣabhaikṣam āśanam nidrā śmaśāne vane | svātantryeṇa nirāṅkuṣaṁ viharāṇaṁ svāntaṁ praśāntaṁ sadā sthairyam yogamahotsave 'pi ca yadi trailokyārāḍyena kim ||*

Naiścintyam here may be a coinage of the verse's author, who was almost certainly not the historical Bhartṛhari.³⁵ Beyond the generically Śaiva character of this verse, it notably contains the keyword *svātantryam* ('autonomy'), a term used everywhere throughout Maheśvarānanda's Kashmirian sources to characterize liberation-in-life.³⁶ Speculatively, it may have been his memory of this term of art in the Bhartṛharian verse that connected the two notions of autonomy and fearlessness in Maheśvarānanda's mind, and might have led him to adopt the latter as the watchword for his understanding of his system's ultimate goal.

In yet another unacknowledged borrowing from Abhinavagupta, Maheśvarānanda goes on to frame his *yogins* in terms taken over *verbatim* from the Kashmirian's description of the *sahṛdaya*, the connoisseur and ideal reader whose competence to understand implicit meaning is one of the foundational presumptions in Abhinava's immensely influential recasting of literary the-

35 Kosambi, who rightly consigns this verse to his edition's Group II (the *saṃśayitaśloka*s or 'questionable verses'), reads *nīscintam*, among many other variants, including an entirely different second half to the verse; the apparatus shows that Rāmacandra's reading here is shared by all of Kosambi's Southern sources. The word *naiścintya*, while straightforward in its sense, seems exceedingly uncommon: Monier-Williams attributes it to Bhartṛhari, giving no text-place; the lexica of Boehtlingk and Roth and of Apte each contain an entry ("Freisein von Sorgen," "Absence of care or anxiety") but record no citations. The word is otherwise of vanishingly rare occurrence, and is only used by Southerners who are contemporaries of or later than Maheśvarānanda, as far as I can gather: it is found twice in the work of Ānandagiri (ca. 1260–1320, a southerner based in Gujarat, according to R. Thangaswami, *Advaita-Vedānta Literature: A Bibliographic Survey* (Madras: University of Madras, 1980), 251), once in Śiṅgabhūpāla's *Rasārṇavasudhākara* (Andhra, ca. 1380) and once in Rājacūḍāmaṇidikṣita's seventeenth century *Kāvyaadarpaṇa*. I am grateful to Sheldon Pollock for alerting me to these references.

36 There might be another indication of Maheśvarānanda's indebtedness to be found in the final verse of the *Mahārthamañjarī*. With the text's argument logically and apotropically concluded in the comments of *gāthā* 70 (see p. 147, below), it continues with a eulogy on the *siddhayoginī* whose apparition inspired the text's creation, translated and discussed pp. 130ff, above. These two verses show only some slight accord in their verbal matter—basically, their shared reference to the *kanthā* ('ascetic's cloak') that is part of the standard equipment of a renunciate—but show a close agreement in their rhetoric of transgression: compare, for instance the Sanskrit verse's celebration of the *yogamahotsava* ('the celebration of yoga') with the Prakrit's *loullaṅghanajōggasiddhipaavī* ('the path that leads to the perfection suited to world-transcendence'). Further, the final verse of the *Mañjarī* is composed in an identical meter to the one ascribed to Bhartṛhari; while the lyric meter *śārdūlavikrīḍita* is by no means rare in Sanskrit, it is unusual (though by no means totally anomalous) to compose Prakrit in a syllabic-quantitative instead of a moraic meter.

ory.³⁷ The *joī* is thus a reader first and foremost, whose sensitivity to textual nuance is what sets him on the road to liberation.

In his concluding verse on the community of *yogins* united through his text, Maheśvarānanda is clear that he is to be numbered among them.³⁸

The author of the *tantra*, reflecting on the miraculous nature of those *yogins* who revel in this sort of fearless calm—inasmuch as he himself is no different from them, he possesses the even greater delight of the abundant self-aware knowledge as to this nature of theirs—with his mind reeling at the magnificence of the sudden expansion of his own awareness, augmented by the all-consuming inrush of that [fearless calm], he speaks of the greatest wonder of all.

The 'greatest wonder' in question is the final loss of inhibition—doing what comes tantrically—that is characteristic of Maheśvarānanda's refined Śākta style of Śaiva religiosity. The yogin then is not just an ideality of the text, but is an actually inhabitable social role that results from an encounter with the *Mahārthamañjarī*, whether as author or as reader. One becomes such a yogin through the act of writing and reading; the two textual acts of composition and consumption are in a significant way fused, as the reader comes to share in the liberating insight that the *tantrakṛt* experiences in the course of making this particular text.

Maheśvarānanda's *Gītā*

In the final bravura movement of the *Mahārthamañjarī*, Maheśvarānanda expands this unique theory of his text's ontology outward into the world of other, prior texts. The last limiting inhibition to fall away is a hermeneutical one: once one's vision has been set right by the liberating knowledge the text offers, the interpretation of all other texts—the 'outer knowledge' such as the *śruti* and *smṛti*—is revealed to be identical with the Krama's own teaching, which lies hidden, like the nectar of immortality in the ocean, waiting to be disclosed.³⁹

37 See Cox, "Saffron in the *rasam*," 189–191.

38 *Mañjarī*, 163: *ittham atyāścaryam naiścintyaśālinām yoginām svabhāvam anusandadhānas tantrakṛt svātmano 'pi tebhyo vailakṣaṇyābhāvāt tattādṛkṣvabhāvatāparāmarśamāṇsalam āhlādātīśayam anubhavann etadāveśavaivaśyodriktasvasaṃvidātopagauravoccalaccittavṛttīś camatkārottaram āha.*

39 *Mañjarī*, 171: *alam atra śrutismṛtyādinām bāhyavidyānām mahārthopāyatayā prātyāyana-*

This forms a radicalized reinvention of the tantric and purāṇic philologists' incorporative style of composition: all reading is assimilated to the creative appropriation of a prior textual authority.

The *Mahārthamañjarī*'s seventieth and penultimate verse presents a demonstration of what this theory of philology looks like in practice. As a hermeneutic coda to the whole text, and as an enactment of the theory of reading suggested by his soteriology, Maheśvarānanda turns to that founding civilizational document of the Sanskritic order, the *Bhagavadgītā*, claiming that its core teaching is nothing but that of the *Mahārthamañjarī* itself.⁴⁰

It is this same Great Purpose that the god Mādhava, possessing sixteen thousand powers, teaches to Pāṇḍu's son at the outset of the war. Thus may there be peace.

In the *Parimala* on this verse, Maheśvarānanda begins in mode similar to his other expansive interpretations of his own Prakrit text:⁴¹

That which is [called the] 'Great' [...] 'Purpose' is the reality that is to be sought after [...] It is precisely this that the blessed 'Mādhava', the beloved of the goddess of fortune and the greatest of the descendants of Madhu, who as one 'possessing sixteen thousand powers,' experiences the real nature of the goddess Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī, uninflected by time and consisting of the manifestation of the [mantra called] the More-Than-Sixteen, [and] so thereby is referred to as 'the god'—as one capable of any of the number of actions beginning with play⁴²—'teaches' (which is to say, 'taught') to

prāgalbhyena. The sixty-eighth *gāthā* and its commentary expand on this. Cf. Veṅkaṭanātha's appeal to this same mythic comparison, see p. 113 fn. 36, above.

40 *gāthā* 70 (*Mañjarī*, 177): *eṇaṃ cea mahatthaṃ juthhārambhammi paṇḍuuttassa | chola-hasahassasattī devo uvadisai mādhavo tti sivaṃ ||*

41 *Mañjarī*, 177–178 *yo'yaṃ [...] mahān [...] arthaḥ prāpyaṃ tattvam [...] tam enaṃ eva ṣoḍaśasahasraśaktiḥ ṣoḍaśādhikāvilāsalakṣaṇaṃ akālākaliṭaṃ śrīkālasaṃkarṣaṇībhāvam anubhavanṇaṃ ata eva devaḥ kṛīḍādyanekaparispandapragalbho mādhavo mahālakṣmīval-labho madhukulottamaś ca bhagavān yuddhārambhe kauravapaṇḍavasenaśaṃgharṣopakramāvasthāyāṃ pāṇḍuputrasyārjunasyopadiśati upādikṣad iti yāvat. prākṛtabhāṣāyāṃ bhūtavartamānādīlakāranaiyatyābhāvāt. yad vā bhagavatā pratiyugam evaṃ asya bhāratādīvyāpārasya pravartyamānatvāt pravāhanityatayā vartamānatvam iti laṭprayogaḥ.*

42 As the noun *devaḥ* is derived from the verbal root √div, see *Dhātupāṭha* 4.1: *divu kṛīḍāvi-jigīṣāvyavahāradyutistutimodamadasvapnakāntigatiṣu* ("√div occurs in the sense of 'play,' 'the desire for victory,' 'interaction,' 'shining,' 'praising,' 'perfuming,' 'intoxicating,' 'dreaming,' 'shining,' and 'motion'").

Arjuna, the 'son of Pāṇḍu,' 'at the outset of the war,' [that is] at the onset of the violence between the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava armies. [As for the use of the present 'teaches' for 'taught,'] this is owing to the absence of any restriction of the verbal forms in Prakrit according to the tenses like past and present. Or, better still, since these events of the Bhārata war—just like everything else—are set in motion in this exact same way by God in each cosmic age, the use of the present tense here is meant as a continuous present, as an ongoing, eternal process.

I have truncated this quotation, leaving out several of Maheśvara's grandiloquent asides and quotations. This nevertheless gives something of the *Parimāla*'s flavor: it is couched in the trappings of a conventional expository commentary, moving through the passage to be explained word by word, and offering interpretative and etymological details of each, in a style familiar to readers throughout the Sanskrit cosmopolis (indeed, throughout much of premodern Eurasia). But the interpretative game here is in important ways a rigged one: in his interpretation of the *gāthā*'s main verb *uvadisai*, for instance, where Maheśvarānanda takes characteristically strategic advantage of Prakrit's lack of finite past tenses to make a leading interpretation of his own verse. More to the point, however, is his gloss of the verse's *cholahasahasasattī*, rendered in Sanskrit as *ṣoḍaśasahasraśaktiḥ*, 'having sixteen thousand powers'. This is grounded in the narrative fact of Kṛṣṇa's sixteen thousand wives in the *Mahābhārata*, though Maheśvarānanda does not mention this here. Instead, he plays on the acoustic and (he would have us understand) conceptual rhyme with the *ṣoḍaśādhikā*, a *mantra* associated with the central Krama goddess Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī.⁴³ With this identification, the central purport of the verse is made clear: Maheśvarānanda would have his readers understand the *Bhagavadgītā* to be communicating the essentials of his own Tantric goddess cult. This is an interpretation of the text which would surprise a great many of the *Gītā*'s readers, then and now. Maheśvarānanda is not alone in so arguing—he associates his interpretation with a similar one made by Abhinavagupta in a now-lost work⁴⁴—but the way he goes

43 Both of the occurrences of this *mantra*-name are questioned in Dwivedi's edition (*Mañjarī*, 177 and 178; in both cases it should be read in compound). On this *mantra*, see Sanderson "The Visualisation of the Deities of the Trika," in *L'Image Divine: Cult et Méditation dans l'Hindouisme*, ed. by A. Padoux (Paris: Éditions de CNRS, 1990), 59n120 and—touching on the passage under discussion here—Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 358–359.

44 Sanderson ("Śaiva Exegesis," 358–359) notes that Maheśvarānanda links this claim with Abhinavagupta's lost *Kramakeli*, a commentary on Eraka's *Kramastotra*. As he notes, Abhinava also authored the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, a minor work broadly arguing the same

about substantiating this claim seems to be unique. After this initial gloss of the global meaning of the whole verse, Maheśvarānanda again goes through its text word by word, this time adducing and interpreting verses from the *Gītā* itself. To give only a brief extract, of his second gloss on the name Mādhava (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) in the *gāthā*.⁴⁵

By revealing the marital connection between himself and Arjuna through the use of the name 'Mādhava,' the Blessed One's eagerness to reveal the secret truth to him [is suggested] ([cf.] 'How can this stupor have come upon you at such a bad time? Arjuna, this is unacceptable to noble people, unworthy of heaven, and giving rise to ill-fame. Kaunteya, do not give yourself over to effeminate weakness! It does not suit you: give up this ignoble weakness of heart and stand up, enemy-burner!' [= BhG 2.2–3]). Immediately after this, because of Arjuna's role as a pupil, adopted as a result of the forlorn state that is his wretched pity ([cf.] 'My natural demeanor has been assaulted by the flaw of wretched pity, my mind is baffled as to *dharma*, and so I ask you: Tell me what would certainly be the better course. I am your pupil; instruct me, who has submitted himself to you.' [= BhG 2.7]), it is revealed that the 'god's' heart is overcome by compassion and that, through such verses as 'Neither he who thinks it to be a killer, nor he who thinks it killed truly understand: it [the Self] neither kills nor is killed' [= BhG 2.19], by revealing the impossibility of killing another person, since the Self—embedded though it be in the body of any of a number of people, for instance Bhīṣma or Droṇa—possesses such qualities as being eternal and all-pervasive, [the god] has a surfeit of grace

point; Maheśvarānanda does not invoke the authority of this work, which he probably did not know.

- 45 *Mañjarī*, 177–178: *mādhava ity anenārjunena sahāsya kiñcid yaunaṃ sambandham unmāyitvā—kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṃ viṣame samupasthitam | anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram arjuna || mā klaibyaṃ gaccha kaunteya naitat tvayy upapadyate | kṣudraṃ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṃ tyaktvottiṣṭha paraṃtapa || iti taṃ prati bhagavato rahasyārthatattvapratyabhiṣṇāpanaunmukhyam. anantaram asyaiva—kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṃ dharmasammūdhacetāḥ | yac chreyaḥ syān nīcitam brūhi taṃ me śiṣyas te'haṃ śādhi mām tvāṃ prapannam || iti kārpaṇyalakṣaṇānāthyapavṛttāc chiṣyabhāvād devasya kārūṇyākṛāntahṛdayatā—ya enaṃ vetti hantāraṃ yaś cainaṃ manyate hatam | ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṃ hanti na hanyate || ityādinā bhīṣmadroṇādyaśeṣaśarīrantarbhūtasvātmano nityatvavyāpakatvādiyogād anyajanahanyamānatvādyasaṃbhavodbhāvanadvārā laukikavat kiṃ bāhyaśāstrabibhīṣakayā kātaryam anubhavasīti tasyopary anugrahodrekaś conmudryate.*

for him, [as it might be expressed:] 'Why is it that you are acting like such a coward, like some ordinary man, out of a terror of the orthodox teachings?'

This is a difficult passage to translate, due to Maheśvarānanda's deliberately odd way of structuring it. Throughout the *Parimala*, he gives massive amounts of quotations, drawing on scriptural texts, the works of earlier authorities, and his own writings. And throughout—like any good Sanskrit scholiast—he prefaces or follows this quotation with a tag, sometimes giving the title or the author of the work, sometimes simply generically introducing or concluding it. Not so here: with the exception of third citation, the direct quotations from the *Gītā* are dropped directly into the running text of the *Parimala*, with no explanatory introduction and only the indeclinable particle *iti*, a meta-pragmatic 'close-quote', at the end (I have tried to reproduce this here through the use of brackets). Over the following two and a half pages of the printed text of the *Parimala*, Maheśvarānanda continues in this vertiginous way, invoking a battery of quotations—of what was after all a text which most of his readers would have had by heart—to serve as a textual apparatus to his account of his own Prakrit *gāthā*'s radical reinterpretation of the *Gītā*. This builds to the crescendo of his gloss of the word *mahattha/mahārtha* itself, where all semblance of the cohesion of his source gives way to a kaleidoscopic set of verses drawn from disconnected parts of the *Gītā*.⁴⁶

In effect, Maheśvarānanda composed two commentaries simultaneously in the *Parimala*—one on his own words in the Prakrit root-verse, and another on his apparatus of citations from the *Gītā*. The result is a duplexed experience of reading that oscillates between the author's own words and that of his source, without any intervening transition. This is an unusual way to write Sanskrit commentary, and the idiosyncrasy would have been apparent to any of the *Parimala*'s initial readers. Though he does not articulate them expressly here, Maheśvarānanda had soteriologically sound reasons for doing so. This induced philological double-vision served as another means by which to catch up his *yogin*-readers, and to shock them out of the dualist habits of thought that led them to think of themselves, Maheśvarānanda, Kṛṣṇa, Kālī, text and counter-text as ontologically separate. Indeed, the passage's location at the end of the *Mañjarī* suggests just this: that it is meant as a final demonstration of all that has proceeded, grounding esoteric doctrine in the

46 *Bhagavadgītā* 4.36, 18.66, 2.40, 18.63, and 4.1–3 are given in rapid succession (*Mañjarī*, 180).

most publically available textual source imaginable in Sanskrit, a secret hidden in plain sight.

The particular form which this final demonstration took, however, is not exhausted by this theological rationale. Maheśvarānanda's unorthodox composition here needs to be situated within the material and practical constraints in which he wrote. A palm-leaf manuscript written in the Grantha script would have to be composed in a running text, scratched into the surface of its physical matrix by an iron stylus, generally in a miniscule hand, covering as much of each side of the leaf as possible, and 'inked' through rubbing lampblack along the incised surface (see Figure 1).⁴⁷ These physical conditions for the production of text-objects were imbricated in local practices of reading and writing: a south Indian palm-leaf manuscript did not lend itself to annotation, rubrication, or illumination, and commentarial works generally circulated independently of their root-texts, as separate codices. Marginal notations like folio numbers are found, but not extensive marginalia or interlineal annotation. In seeking to relate his own words and the received text of the *Gītā*, this jarring style of juxtaposition may have been the only way practically possible for Maheśvarānanda: these practical constraints did not allow for the sort of paratextual displacement that commentarial and exegetical writing depended upon elsewhere in the pre-print world.

Maheśvarānanda's local textual culture thus may plausibly have constrained his own compositional habits, leading him to produce a single, running text, tacking back and forth between his own words and that of his source. By contrast, in the other textual-cultural environment in which the *Mahārthamañjarī* was transmitted—above all, in the Kashmirian world of birch-bark codices and ink-pens—the material and practical conditions differed greatly (see Figure 2).⁴⁸ Striking evidence of the truncated, inferior version of the *Mahārthamañjarī* that circulated in Kashmir can be seen here:⁴⁹ the seventieth *gāthā* (itself an alternate version of that found in the south) is given without any comment in the *Parimala*. And though this folio, the manuscript's final, just gives its version of Maheśvarānanda's text, its format easily allows for marginalia and other forms of paratextual comment, as indeed are found in other

47 On these material-cultural constraints, see Jeremiah Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library, 1982), 5–8; and Dominik Wujastyk, "Indian Manuscripts."

48 See Losty, *The Art of the Book* and Bühler, *Detailed report*, 29–34.

49 The basis for this judgment can be found in Cox, "Making a tantra," 276–283 and (more briefly) idem, "Saffron in the *rasam*," 191–193 and "A South Indian Śākta Anthropogony," 205–206.

Kashmirian *Mahārthamañjarī* manuscripts, and as anyone familiar with Śāradā manuscripts can attest to be common practice.

These limits imposed by local textual habit, however, opened up rather than foreclosed new possibilities of writing for Maheśvarānanda. These two texts running together in turns prompt what McGann once termed a sort of 'radial reading' that pushed at the limits of the text-artifact of his time and place, while subserving the author's therapeutic, salvific purpose.⁵⁰ This mode of reading was embedded within material and practical circumstances that greatly differed from those of its creator's northern sources. Kashmirians who were possessed of the same theological priorities as Maheśvarānanda never produced anything like the readerly-writerly fusion that concludes the *Mahārthamañjarī*. Indeed, this may account for the *Mahārthamañjarī*'s radical condensation at the hands of later Kashmirian readers.⁵¹

The doubled philological gesture embodied in the seventieth *gāthā* is more than just evidence of the South Indian non-invention of the footnote. It points to a transformed philological consciousness at work in the *Mahārthamañjarī*: as with Vedāntadeśika's habits of scrupulous citation and his attention to the nature of textual transmission, this marks another area of real innovation, a point where we can perceive the junction of the material-practical and the conceptual-ideational in the work of these two philologists. Maheśvarānanda's embrace of the *Gītā* does not end with this act of duplexed commentary. Instead, after his exhaustively cross-referenced second pass through his Prakrit root-verse, he turns to his own elevated register of Sanskrit verse, writing in

50 On 'radial reading' ("in which the activity of reading regularly transcends its own ocular physical bases") see Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991), 116 ff.; McGann argues that "[what] is called 'scholarship' is one territory ... where radial types of reading are continually being put into practice" (119). The critical edition is an especially suggestive concretization of such a mode of reading:

One does not simply move through works like these in a linear way ... [rather,] one moves around the edition, jumping from the reading text to the apparatus, perhaps from one of these to the notes or to an appendix, perhaps then back to some part of the front matter which may be relevant, and so forth. The edition also typically drives one to other books and acts of reading, ancillary or related materials which have to be drawn into the reading process in order to expand and enrich the textual and the reading field.

From this perspective, Maheśvarānanda's embedded style of composition served as a form of constraint or resistance, canalizing the perceptual and cognitive acts of simultaneously processing multiple texts within a single extended chirographic string.

51 On this point, cf. Cox, "Saffron in the *rasam*," 191–193.

an epic style, but in a way that could not to be confused with the work of the *Mahābhārata* poets:⁵²

The great yogin Vyāsa, Parāśara's son, that ocean of strength and calm, set about composing the *Song of the Blessed One* within the *Bhārata* and spoke the following: Bibhatsu, Arjuna the terrible, came to the field of the Kurus and, in the midst of the armed sons of the Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his own battle-ready Pāṇḍavas, gathered together his army in the blink of an eye. Looking out upon the fathers, grandfathers, brothers, sons, grandsons and even the teachers there, that he would have to kill with his own hand, he weakened and he wavered. Fearful of that horrid task, he gave up his preparations for battle. Arjuna was disgusted, and no longer cared for the wealth of kingship—realizing all of this, the blessed Mukunda, Rukmiṇī's lord, his mind overcome with compassion, spoke to him as he stood in his chariot. "How can it be that this great despair overtakes you now, at the worst possible moment? Give up this weakmindedness, condemned in this world and the next! Who is your father and who your brother, who is your *guru* and who are your relations? Indeed, who are you, and what is this compassion of yours? Who is there who might serve as its object? Or who is killed and by whom? The many forms of expression that we find in the world and in texts are fashioned from generalities: do not feel terror at these, ignoring the particulars!"

This begins a third retelling of the *Gītā*-as-Krama-teaching: here Vyāsa, the omniscient author of (and character in) the *Mahābhārata*, is significantly described as a *mahāyogin*, and is thus obliquely linked with Maheśvarānanda's culminating description of himself and his imagined readers as liberated hermeneuts. More than half of the passage's thirty-eight śloka are linked together,

52 *Mañjarī*, 180–181: *pārāśaryo mahāyogī dhairyaḡāmbhīrasāgaraḡ | bhārate bhagavadgītām adhikṛtyedam abravīt || yat kurukṣetram ākramya dhṛtarāṣṭreṣu dhanviṣu | pāṇḍaveṣu ca sajjeṣu saṡgrhyākṣauhiṇīm kṣaṇāt || pitṛṇ pitāmāhān bhrātṛṇ putrān pauṭrān gurūn api | hantavyān ātmahastena prekṣya vaiklavyavihvalam || trasyantaṡ karmaṇaḡ krūrād avadhūtāhvodyamam | bibhatsamānaṡ bibhatsuṡ nispṛhaṡ rājyasampadi || anusandhāya bhagavān mukundo rukmiṇīpatiḡ | kāruṇyākṛāntahṛdayaḡ syandanasthaṡ tam abhyadhāt || hanta kiṡṡ tava saṡṡvṛttam akāṇḡde kaṡmalottaram | vaiklavyaṡ tyajyatām etal lokadvayavigarhitam || kaḡ pitā tava ko bhrātā ko guruḡ ke ca bāṇdhavāḡ | tvam eva tāvat ko nāma kāruṇyaṡ nāma kiṡṡ tava || pātram etasya kaṡ ca syāt kena ko vābhīhanyate | bahvyaḡ sāmānyato bhāṡāḡ kalpyante lokaṡāstrayoḡ || viṡeṡam aparījñāya tābhyo mā bhūd bibhīṡikā |*

as here, in extended verse clusters or *kulakas*, long sentences that spill over from one verse to the next, in an effort perhaps meant to mimic enthusiastic *ex tempore* composition. In this final move, Maheśvarānanda fuses the acts of reading, writing, and interpretation into a single novel mode, overwriting or (perhaps better) writing *through* the *Gītā* to his own ends. As he produces line after line of his own carefully crafted, artfully ecstatic verse, we leave off from the conventional mode of exegetical philology from which he had taken his earlier marks, and enters into something quite different. There is an implicit argument here, one in line with the wider project of the *Mahārthamañjarī*: Maheśvarānanda would have his readers know that once one's vision has been set aright, constituting one's own values and even rewriting one's textual precursor becomes something natural, as simple and as self-evident as grasping the implied sense of a line of verse.

Maheśvarānanda ends the *Parimala*'s lengthy comments on this last *gāthā* on an unexpected, even bizarre note, suggesting once more his idiosyncratic sense of the interrelationship of reading, interpretative freedom, and the dauntless absence of inhibition of *naiścintyam*. Invoking the Pāṇinian habit of inclusive abbreviation (*pratyāhāra*), Maheśvarānanda informs his readers—there is no other way they could have happened upon this themselves—to connect the final word of the seventieth *gāthā* (*sivam* [= *śivam*]) with the first word of the entire Prakrit text (*ṇamiūṇā* [= Skt. *natvā*]). The *Mahārthamañjarī* is thus shown to embed within itself not one but two acrostics: the first, “having bowed to Śiva,” he tells us, can be further reduced to the text's first and last syllables, *ṇavam*, “new.” Maheśvarānanda would have his readers understand that it is this novelty, the will to transform the world and oneself, that is embedded in this way within the verbal fabric of his work. His willingness to manipulate the language of his textual object, and to reinscribe its meaning within his own interpretative program thus extended to his own work, in ways that exceeded anything his anonymous tantric predecessors had themselves ever set out to do.

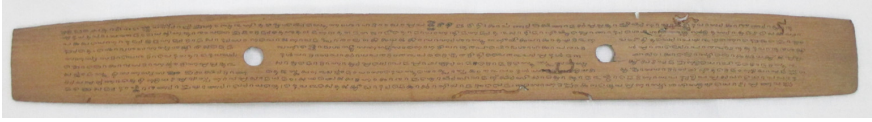


FIGURE 1 Mahārthamañjarīparimala, *Adyar library ms. no. 72866* (Descriptive Catalogue no. 966), folio 95v (image courtesy of Hugo David)

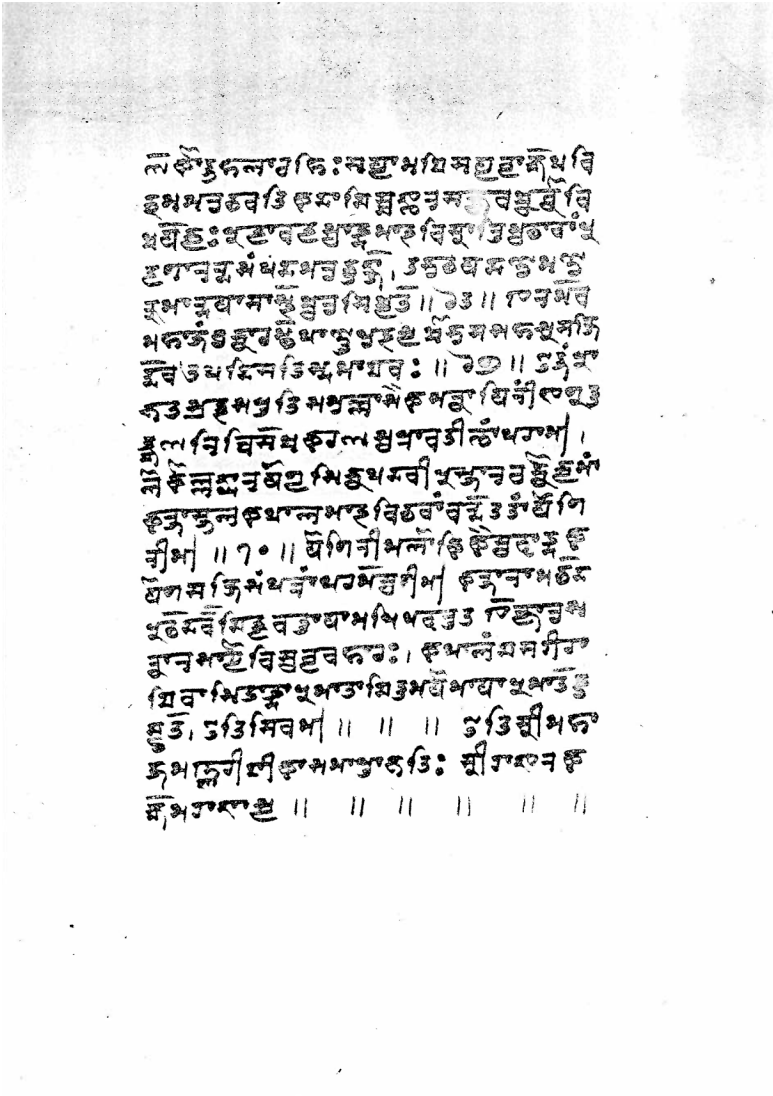


FIGURE 2 Mahārthamañjarīparimala, *Benares Hindu University manuscript no. 14/7770*, final folio (image courtesy of Andrew Nicholson)

Conclusions: Philology as Politics, Philology as Science

In southern India around 1100 CE, certain unknown authors, participating in conventions that were already many centuries old, began to produce Sanskrit texts claiming to be the teachings of various divinities and other supernatural beings. The legatees of existing textual corpora that had been composed outside the region, many of these new works were the outcome of textual practices that were fundamentally philological in nature. They synthesized extant textual materials, interpreted and adapted them in light of their authors' particular interests and projects, and offered rationalized schemes of textual organization that included themselves, their textual precursors, and the scriptures of other traditions. A great many of these texts, both those cast in the narrative form of the *purāṇas* and in the prescriptive mode of the *tantras*, were invested in an effort to organize knowledge as it pertained to the region's Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples, among the most significant social institutions of the far South, whose economic and political as well as religious significance surged in this period.

This anonymous philology in turn provoked changes in the intellectual habits of authors who chose to disseminate works under their own names. In Śāradātanaya's long verse essay on Sanskrit dramatic theory, a first-order adaptation of the new philology is apparent: the meandering verse-style of the anonymous philologists supplied a model for his writing, while the habit of confected citation and of the integration of already existing text into a new context supplied crucial elements of the dramaturge's *modus operandi*. By the time of Veṅkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda, both writing around the turn of the fourteenth century, these new philologies had become long established parts of the textual universe of the far south, and their works thus provide an especially rich opportunity to assess the changes that this engendered. Veṅkaṭanātha defended the bibliographic scheme of the Pañcarātra scriptural canon, while fending off efforts of his fellow Vaiṣṇavas to practice an atheizing higher criticism on parts of this canon. His purpose was thus explicitly conservative; yet his defense of his religion's scriptures evinces a new precision of both textual method and manner of argument, evidently deriving from his study of the *tantras* themselves. Veṅkaṭanātha's novel relationship to his scriptural sources seems to have had wider repercussions in his oeuvre, complexly interacting with his own remarkable poetic writings. And if Veṅkaṭanātha worked to con-

servatively defend the Pañcarātra's extant corpus of *tantras*, Maheśvarānanda sought to crash the gates of the Śaiva canon, and to participate in its proliferation with his own hybrid work of scholarship, belles-lettres, ritual, and theology. The *Mahārthamañjarī* offers a testament to the epistemic openness that the new textuality seems thus to have fostered, providing a uniquely valuable reflection on the hermeneutic consequences of such openness. For Maheśvarānanda, his imagined ideal readers and he himself were at once aesthetes and religious virtuosi, the consequences of which he demonstrated at length in his culminating over-coding of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Although some might hopefully find the works surveyed here to be interesting in their own right, it may fairly be asked whether their study, much less their juxtaposition, tells us anything about the world that is worth knowing. A few initial responses to this immediately suggest themselves. Śāradātanaya projected the doctrines of literary theorists onto spurious works, seemingly of his own invention; Veṅkaṭanātha was led to admit, through reason and empirical evidence, that certain works of his canon were the creation of human beings; Maheśvarānanda cheerfully accepted as much in his own work as an author. We may thus presume an awareness on all of their part of the real human agency behind the creation of their scriptural literature. Yet they surely were sincere in their understanding of these works as the transcription of a divine intention into time and history. From the point of view of hermeneutical charity, we might attempt to inhabit this thought-world, with its porous and overlapping notions of who is authorized to speak in the voice of a god.

And as in the case of other modes of textual scholarship before the coming of modernity, we may also admiringly note the sheer human effort involved in this scholarly labor. The physical and mental exertion required to procure and to work through such an enormous quantity of text-artifacts—as anyone who has ever worked with palmleaf manuscripts in the Grantha script can attest, they are resolutely not a user-friendly medium—the pains taken in memorization, composition, revision, and public dissemination: all of this summons up a world of practices that we moderns can scarcely imagine. Veṅkaṭanātha, who was impossibly prolific in Sanskrit, Tamil and Maṇipravāḷam, provides a limit case here. Seeing a real problem at work in the varied claims to revelation, and gaining a new appreciation that the philology of medieval India was worthwhile because it was hard: these might be valuable in their own right, but neither is enough.

If we take our admiration for our scholarly forebears as only a starting point, what might we learn from these modes of philology? First of all, there is the fact that a history of them can even be written. I hope to have demonstrated that it is not only possible, but also a productive way to approach even well-

known works and authors. But the significance of this small contribution to a nascent history of global philology may perhaps be best brought out by setting it within a more capacious context, and within an explicitly comparative frame of reference. I conclude by offering two such attempts: first, by linking these scholarly projects to the wider political and institutional domains in which they took shape; second, by seeing them as assimilable to the historical study of the rational techniques for understanding the human and natural world, that is, of science.

Context One: Philology in and as Temple-State Politics

All three of our philologists were close contemporaries, were Brahman men who were the recipients of a traditional śāstric education and poetic training, and were inheritors of broadly similar corpora of scriptural literature. Śāradātanaya, as far as we can tell, might have spent his whole life in the learned *otium* of an *agrahāra*, a Brahmanical estate: there is little that can be said of his environment, other than it was broadly representative of the brahmanical culture from which the *purāṇas* and *tantras* emerged. Veṅkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda were active in similar milieux, the great temple-cities of Śrīraṅgam and Cidambaram. Veṅkaṭanātha had been born and raised near Kāñcī, in the north of the Tamil country, and in traditional accounts he is said to have had a highly mobile career, including supposed periods of exile fleeing the armies of the Delhi sultan;¹ Maheśvarānanda for his part boasts of his wanderlust.² But both spent their productive years in these great Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava centers: Maheśvara writes explicitly of composing the *Mahārthamañjarī* while resident in Cidambaram; whether or not Veṅkaṭanātha lived in Śrīraṅgam at the time of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*'s composition, its arguments were intended for the community centered there, the hub of the southern Vaiṣṇava world of his day.

1 See Hopkins, *Singing the body of God*, 58–75 for a succinct synthesis of the existing narrative accounts of Veṅkaṭanātha's life; the only evidence of the historical Veṅkaṭanātha's awareness of Muslims derives from a passing reference in his *Abhūtistava* (vs. 22ab: *kalipraṇīdhilakṣaṇaiḥ kalitaśākya lokāyataiḥ turuṣkayavanādibhir jagati jṛmbhamāṇaṃ bhayam*, "[Oh Lord, destroy] the fear that grows great in the world through the Turks and Arabs, those agents of the Kali age who have urged on the Buddhists and the materialists."). That Veṅkaṭanātha sees the threat of Islam to lie in the realm of philosophical doxography does not lend much credence to the idea that he had first-hand experience of the armies of the Sultanate.

2 Speaking of his early life, he writes: "He passed the time wandering to the ends of the earth." (*Mañjarī*, 190: *paryatamś ca diśām antān kālām kañcid avāhayat*).

By the turn of the fourteenth century, these two centres were sprawling Brahmanical city-states, each the apex of complex agrarian order. The final decline of the imperial Coḷa kings left in its wake what were in essence small, wealthy autonomous polities centered on the two temple complexes, the ruling societies of which maintained alliances with the shifting constellations of kings, pretenders, and local strongmen that made up the ruling élite of post-Coḷa times. Consider the campaign led by Jaṭavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya: in 1258 CE, this king from the far south left a welter of grandiloquent inscriptions on the walls of both temple complexes, memorializing the occasion of spectacular ritual actions.³ The two temple-cities were thus sites of record for the royal politics of our authors' time, and supplied the stages for public performance with consequences well beyond their own precincts.⁴

The sources for a social history of these massively important institutions are many and ready to hand: I reviewed earlier the beginnings of the Brahmanical hegemony centered on Cidambaram (see pp. 40ff, above); by the end of the thirteenth century, this group had aggrandized into a substantial landholding class throughout the micro-region, and had been joined by an increasingly powerful network of *maṭams* or monasteries drawing their membership and support from the dominant agrarian gentry.⁵ The Śrīraṅgam temple

3 Cidambaram: see *South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 4 (Mysore: Archaeological Survey of India, 1986–), nos. 618–621, 624–632; Śrīraṅgam, *South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 24, nos. 194–199. Interestingly, these clusters of inscriptions are markedly different in flavor: the Śrīraṅgam records, predominantly in Sanskrit verse, record Sundara Pāṇḍya's extensive donations to the temple; those in Cidambaram, largely in poetic Tamil, are martial and erotic in their subject matter, mentioning in passing the Pāṇḍya king's performance of a *tulābhāra* ceremony (where the king gives away his weight in gold: 4:620, in Tamil prose).

4 Compare Emmanuel Francis and Charlotte Schmid, "Preface," in *Pondicherry Inscriptions*, Vol. 2, ed. G. Vijayavenugopal (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2010), xxi ff., who theorize the existence of Coḷa-era '*meykkīrtti* sites' as places of particular élite political-rhetorical investment; on the notion of the epigraphic 'stage,' see Noboru Karashima, "South Indian Temple Inscriptions: a New Approach To Their Study," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 19, no. 1 (1996): 1–12.

5 In addition to the fourth volume of *South Indian Inscriptions*, which contains part (though by no means all) of the Cidambaram epigraphic corpus, significant secondary studies of the medieval temple-city include S.R. Subrahmanyam, "The Oldest Chidambaram Inscriptions (Part 2)," *Journal of Annamalai University* 13 (1942): 55–91; Kenneth R. Hall, "Merchants, Rulers, and Priests in an Early South Indian Sacred Centre: Cidambaram in the Age of the Cōḷas," in *Structure and Society in Early South India. Essays in Honour of Noboru Karashima*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001); Orr, "Temple Life at Chidambaram;" B.G.L. Swamy, *Chidambaram and Naṭarāja: Problems and Rationalization* (Mysore: Geetha

complex possessed, like Cidambaram, an enormous epigraphical archive, and was the subject of an internally diffuse and heterogeneous narrative text (the *Koyilōluku*, a work that awaits reassessment by current scholarship), while providing the scene for a considerable body of Sanskrit and Tamil early-modern hagiography.⁶

The Coḷa state system had provided these two sites with more than just their material wealth; as suggested earlier, the enormous growth of the regional temple culture supplied a powerful impetus to the creation of the *tantra* and *purāṇa* literature that preceded Veṅkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda's own work. It was these works that provided these new and newly-empowered sites with liturgies, narratives of origin, and a place in the wider fabric of pan-Indic culture. And so it was in these great temple-states where the stakes of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava philology were particularly high. In the case of Śrīraṅgam, there is some evidence to suggest that the politics of scriptural philology impinged directly on the wider life of the institution. The temple authorities there may have changed the liturgy from the Pāñcarātrins to that of the Vaikhānasas under the influence of Orissan occupiers in the years 1223–1225, a few decades before the active lifetime of our authors.⁷

Book House, 1979); and Paul Younger, *The home of dancing Śiva: the traditions of the Hindu temple in Citamparam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. 125–158; the last two should be read with caution. Herman Kulke, *Cidambaramāhātmya: eine Untersuchung der religions- geschichtlichen und historischen Hintergründe für die Entstehung der Tradition einer südindischen Tempelstadt* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970); David Smith, *The Dance of Śiva: religion, art and poetry in South India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Karen Prentiss, *The embodiment of bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) all contain much useful information, although their principal interest is not the social history of the temple. See also Cox, *Politics, Kingship and Poetry*, 176–200, for a longer account of the transformations of Cidambaram in this period.

- 6 Other than the pioneering work of edition and interpretation by V.N. Hari Rao (*Kōil Olugu: the chronicle of the Srirangam temple with historical notes* (Madras: Rochouse, 1961); *History of the Śrīraṅgam Temple* (Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1976)), the *Koyilōluku* provides one of the key sources to Appadurai's ethnohistorical study (*Worship and conflict under colonial rule: a South Indian case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981), 85–101); the social history of Śrīraṅgam's epigraphy (published in SI 24, with useful notes and a learned introduction) is capably surveyed in Leslie Orr, "The Vaiṣṇava community at Śrīraṅgam: the testimony of early medieval inscriptions," *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies* 3, no. 3 (1995): 109–136. Veṅkaṭanātha's place in the hagiographic literature is surveyed in Hopkins, *Singing the body of God*.
- 7 Leach "The Three Jewels," following Rastelli, *Die Tradition des Pāñcarātra im Spiegel der Pārameśvarasamhitā* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006) (who in turn bases herself on Hari Rao, *History of the Śrīraṅgam Temple*) states this

Veṅkaṭanātha's efforts at rapprochement between the two Vaiṣṇava orders (pp. 100ff, above) might thus have possessed a powerful and very this-worldly impetus. This is only a single example of Veṅkaṭanātha's supposed public commitments: Vaiṣṇava hagiographical accounts connect him with the efforts to spirit away the Raṅganāthasvāmin idol from Śrīraṅgam when the temple-city was sacked by the armies of Malik Kafur (ca. 1310), as they assign to his hand a laudatory inscriptional verse in honor of Gopaṇārya, the Vijayanagara brahman 'general' responsible for the subsequent reestablishment of the temple's main image.⁸ Whatever the historical truth of these accounts, they are united in

as historical fact; the evidence for this, however, is far more equivocal. Evidence for the presence of Orissans at the Śrīraṅgam temple is furnished by an inscription dated to 28 February 1225 CE in the ninth regnal year of Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (twice published in *South Indian Inscriptions*: 4:500 and 24:192), recording a decision (*vyavasthai*, ll. 1, 14) re-organizing the election of temple officials from the ranks of the Śrīvaiṣṇava liturgical elite. This new arrangement was put into place owing to the earlier actions of ten unnamed temple officials who, during their tenures of office, 'had colluded with the Oḍḍas' and committed a lengthy list of financial malfeasances, leading to the disruption of worship and the impoverishment of the temple endowment (ll. 5–6, 9: *muṇṇālil koyilukku nirvāhakarāy patiṇamu ceytu pattupperumāka avaravar kālattu oṭṭaroṭe kūṭi niṇru* [...] *ippaṭi tīruvārāṭaṇan taṭṭup-paṭṭat' enrum śrīpaṇṭāra uṭalkaḷ ippaṭi aliyā niṇrat' ēṇrum*). For the additional claim that this disruption resulted in adoption of Vaikhānasa ritual practice, we must turn to the *Koyilōḷuku*, which describes how in the aftermath of an invasion from Orissa "some of the servants in the temple became traitors to Śrīraṅgam, and even some priests fell in with this group, and perverting the truth, fled. Some Vaiṣṇava brahmans, being learned in the blessed Vaikhānasa *śāstra*, began to perform temple worship. Followers of other religious orders, those who are practitioners of the six systems of thought, then freely set up homes and began to live in the sacred territory of the Śrīraṅgam." (*Koyilōḷuku*, 35: *sthalattile cila pariṇaṇkaḷ raṅ-gadrohikaḷāy atil arccakarum anupraviṣṭarāy mēy tīyṇtu pokaiyil, śrīvaikhānasaśāstrajñārāṇa nampimār ārādhaṇam paṇṇikkōṇṭu vantavarkaḷ. itaramatastharāṇa ṣaṣṣamayattāṭṭum tīravarāṇkantirupatiyile vīṭu kaṭṭikkōṇṭu svatantramāy iruntārkaḷ.*) As Hari Rao (*History of the Śrīraṅgam Temple*, 70) notes, this account is retrojected into the tenth century, "during the pontificate of Uyyakoṇḍār and Maṇakkāl Nampi." This positivist blunder on the *Koyilōḷuku*'s compilers' part, however, may contain a significant detail, for the text goes on to attribute to this situation Yāmuna's 'conversion' to the Śrīvaiṣṇava path by Maṇakkāl Nampi, and his subsequent composition of the *Āgamaprāmāṇyam* in order to refute the new non-Vaiṣṇava colonists in Śrīraṅgam (*History of the Śrīraṅgam Temple*, Hari Rao misunderstands this passage in his translation (39), and thus fails to notice this literary-historical detail). The *Koyilōḷuku*'s account may thus contain a reflex of the philological tensions at work in Veṅkaṭanātha's text, projected back in time onto Yāmuna, in a manner consistent with the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*'s own invocations of the earlier work.

8 See the discussion by Eugen Hultzsch in *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 6, 322–330, who notes the

their presentation of Veṅkaṭanātha's efforts to preserve the Vaiṣṇava order—something to which his later recruitment as the founding figure of the *vaṭakaḷai* ('northern tendency') sectarian tradition also attests.⁹ Certainly Veṅkaṭanātha was involved in the institutional Vaiṣṇavism of Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram, and there were surely political, as well as theological, stakes to this involvement.

In contrast to Veṅkaṭanātha's status as a Vaiṣṇava celebrity, Maheśvarānanda cut no public figure. The *Mahārthamañjarī* was to be widely copied and periodically cited and admired, but its author—none of whose other works survive—evidently avoided any entanglement with the complex world of Cidambaram in the wake of the Coḷa period, or at least he left no surviving trace of such involvement. The construction around 1250 of a temple consecrated to Kālī, Maheśvarānanda's *iṣṭadevatā*, under the auspices of the Kāṭava warlord Kopperuñciṅkaṇ might have been of some significance in the *tāntrika*'s life, but I know of nothing linking him to it.¹⁰ Nor do we have any clear sense of what the changes underway in the Śaiva temple-city might have meant for him: while Cidambaram knew no major disruptions to its worship, it was seemingly in this period that it adopted its peculiar position in the landscape of Tamil temples, as the privately held property of an interrelated group of priestly families, the Dīkṣitars. Whether Maheśvarānanda was a distant ancestor of the temple's modern proprietors, or whether he lived as a rentier in one of Cidambaram's surrounding *piṭākai*-suburbs—there is not a trace of evidence to allow us to decide this. He was almost certainly a witness to a remarkably fertile time and place for Śaiva scholarship. Cidambaram in the thirteenth and fourteenth century was the site for a host of different visions of the Śaiva religion, whether cast in Sanskrit or Tamil—among them the many different works in both languages attributed to Umāpatiśivācārya and the other major works of the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta (the *Mēykanṭaccāttiraṅkaḷ*), and the peculiar Śivādvaita espoused in Śrīkaṇṭha's commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*. Again, however, there is no trace of these works to be found in the *Mahārthamañjarī*.

appearance of this verse in the *Guruparamparāprabhāva* (where it is attributed to Veṅkaṭanātha) and the *Koyilōḷuku* (where it is not).

- 9 See Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti)*, 4–14, 156–172 on this attribution and its anachronistic lack of fit to the thought of the historical Veṅkaṭanātha, see also Hardy ("The Philosopher As Poet," 309–318) on the patterns of theological reason that can be abstracted from one of Veṅkaṭanātha's *stava*-hymns.
- 10 The foundation is dateable on the basis of an unpublished inscription (*Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy*, no. 401 of 1903); on Kopperuñciṅkaṇ see Nilakantha Sastri, *The Cōlas*, 422 ff. and especially Es. Ar. Pālacuppiramaṇiyam, *Peṇu centamiḷ vāḷap pīraṇta Kāṭavaṇ Kōpperuñciṅkaṇ* (Ceṇṇai: Pāri Nilaiyam, 1965).

However paradoxically, the lack of any notice of Maheśvarānanda outside his own work signals an extraordinary political fact of late-medieval philology: its independence. Neither Maheśvarānanda nor Veṅkaṭanātha seems to have had any involvement with royal patronage or court politics: whatever his prominence within the Vaiṣṇava world of his day, the hagiographical efforts to link Veṅkaṭanātha with the Vijayanagara dynasty are unconvincing, to my eyes at least. Maheśvarānanda, if anything, appears to have had the more typical career: a learned man of the *agrahāra*, he was able to produce his work of radical scholarship secure in the fact that it could reach an audience of readers who could appreciate his wide reading and enjoy the boldness of his conception. Despite his acts of textualized self-deification and his maverick recasting of the *Gītā*, his work, in contrast to his philological contemporaries in the Latinate, Perso-Arabic or Sinitic worlds, excited no public denunciations, required no licensure for its publication, and—for all its overwhelming linguistic exuberance—did not need to be obscured by allegory or coded expression. Imagine Menocchio without an Inquisition.

Maheśvarānanda's work as a Śaiva philologist seems to have been premised on just this sort of autonomy; it is not going too far to see his insistent focus upon *svātantryam* and *naiścintyam*—independence and fearless self-confidence—as a soteriological gloss on this, an abstraction grounded in the real conditions of his social existence. Faced with this, it is best to demur from Pollock's insistence on the strictly courtly location of philological scholarship in premodern India. When he writes that “all the critical innovations in the aestheticization of language and its philologization came from the stimulus offered by court patronage,” Pollock is grounded in an extraordinary survey of Indic literary history, as well as in a powerful critique of the inherited thinking about the instrumental relationship of culture to power.¹¹ Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to doubt this supposed centrality. The immensity of the extant corpus of Indic manuscripts did not come about as a result of massively funded and efficient royal scriptoria, but by the time and effort of unknown private copyists. This suggests that the work of composition as well as reproduction took place in ways that were distributed and decentralized. The anonymous philologists traced here were by no means indifferent to courtly or royal attention—kings, as well as being possible open-handed patrons, were eminently good to think with—but the work of scholarship and authorship carried on far away from the centers of high politics.

11 Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 523; on the critique of legitimation theory and other examples of social-scientific reductionism, see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 511–524.

Pollock's compelling effort to rethink the culture-power connection in pre-modern India in fact inadvertently reproduces a long-standing historiographical problem, the insistent focus on the dynastic state as the unit of historical relevance. This has allowed him to teach us extraordinary things, for instance about the competition between political formations that was an engine for much innovative literary and theoretical writing.¹² But an unintended consequence of this way of organizing the data tends to misrecognize those times and places—like the far South in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—that fall between the cracks of dynastically construed history. These become unstructured terrain: the central Kāveri plain between the Coḷa and Vijayanagara hegemones was thus the scene of Hoysala, Pāṇḍya, and Khalji martial incursions, but little else.¹³ The philology of this time and place suggests something much different, above all an intellectual and concomitantly social dynamism that our available historiographic tools do little to help us to capture. It is perhaps by starting with what we can know about this admittedly élite form of culture and sociality that we may prove able to frame research questions that can prompt a different, and fundamentally better, understanding of this past world.

Context Two: Indic Philology and the History of Science

It is not at all original to suggest that the history of philology can be profitably seen as a part of the history of science; outside of southern Asia—where the history of textual scholarship is, as we have seen, underdeveloped—this is already standard practice. For instance, in the field of classical and Renaissance studies, Grafton's several surveys of Kepler's dual career as Latinist and astronomer, and his intellectual biography of the astrologer Girolamo Cardano demonstrate the inseparability of philological methods from wider modes of rational inquiry;¹⁴ while Sebastiano Timpanaro's classic historical analysis of

12 On royal patronage as a spur to the sciences of language ('grammar envy'), see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 177–188; on the inter-court competition around the turn of the second millennium that produced the several brilliant generations of Kannada poets and critics (Pampa, Ranna, Nāgavarma), see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 356–363, 368–374.

13 The lack of a synthetic historical scholarship on this period since Krishnaswami Aiyangar's sophisticated but exclusively political-historical *South India and her Muhammadan Invaders* (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921[!]) supplies an eloquent demonstration of this problem.

14 For Kepler, see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in*

Lachmannian editing—in its close attention to the development of the isolable elements of a methodological program—is itself a model history of scientific technique.¹⁵ Beyond the limits of the western Eurasian subcontinent, Benjamin Elman's work on the *K'ao-cheng* scholarship of the late Ming dynasty explicitly takes its bearings from an explicitly Kuhnian framework of conceptual and institutional change.¹⁶ And very recently, there has appeared a manifesto of sorts for an alliance between the history of science and the history of textual scholarship. Lorraine Daston and Glenn Most begin from the shared institutional and intellectual space occupied by astronomy and Classical philology in the nineteenth century German research university, but they proceed to argue for something much more ambitious: a genuinely comparative, transregional history of philology, focusing above all on the practices, rather than the objects, of a range of philologies, as a prolegomenon to a more general comparative enterprise of the history of knowledge and of systematic rational endeavour uniting the natural and the human sciences.¹⁷

For all of this earlier thinking on the subject, it might be objected that the materials studied earlier—from the poet Cekkīlār's manipulation of the documentary order to Maheśvarānanda's self-reflexive overcoding of the norms of commentarial scholarship—might be too eccentric from any systematic norm of textual scholarship to be understood as analogous to scientific rationality. Moreover, historical science studies is a large, complex, and contentious field, and I do not claim anything remotely approaching a comprehensive view of it. But even a brief review of some of it suggests there is much that a historian of Indian philology can learn from this scholarship, both to usefully question

An Age of Science, 1450–1800 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 178–203; and *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 114–136; for Cardano, see Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), especially 127–155.

- 15 Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, trans. Glen R. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Most, in his commendable introduction to his translation, examines the book as an instance of the history of science (Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, 18–25).
- 16 Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Social and Intellectual Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1990), e.g. 88–137; cf. the appreciation of this work in Pollock, "Future Philology?" 944.
- 17 Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, "History of Science and History of Philologies" *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 378–390. This superb, if brief and programmatic, essay only came to my attention during the final revisions of the present study.

conventional wisdom and to provoke future lines of inquiry.¹⁸ I propose three such lessons here: the insistence upon a historicism that refuses in advance to subordinate its scholarly object to another set of contemporaneous causes or processes; the commitment to avoiding a teleological view of historical change; and an attention to the technical details of the practice of knowledge-making, and a corresponding willingness to admit into explanation the agency of non-rational, even insentient entities.

Non-Reductive Historicism

In situating Veṅkaṭanātha, Maheśvarānanda, and their anonymous forebears within the institutional worlds of Śrīraṅgam and Cidambaram, I do not wish to claim that their scholarship should be seen to be epiphenomenal to the politics of these local worlds, or to the wider politics of the post-Coḷa South. Surely—as I suggested above—knowledge of this institutional setting raises important questions, and gives some intimation of the wider stakes of their arguments. But attention to however much or little we may know of the circumambient world of politics and social power cannot exhaust our inquiry into the world of textual studies in medieval (or other) times; nor can it meaningfully explain the innovations of method or of argument that these contained. When Veṅkaṭanātha repurposed the scriptural category of *saṅkara*, ‘contamination,’ and the need for its avoidance into a broadly conceived method of textual study, he was not simply advancing the claim of his particular liturgical rite to dominance, however much his methods may have subserved such a claim, or however much he himself may have sought such an outcome.¹⁹ But

18 Without laying any claim to how representative these works may be of their wider discipline(s), I have found several works to be especially useful. Peter Galison, “Ten Problems in History and Philosophy of Science,” *Isis* 99 no. 1 (2008): 111–124 (a state-of-the-discipline overview) and Bruno Latour’s widely-cited study (*Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987)) both supply useful methodological frameworks. As practical exempla of the field, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer’s deservedly classic case-study (*Leviathan and the Air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); see also Steven Shapin, “The house of experiment in seventeenth-century England,” *Isis* 79, no. 3 (1988): 373–404; and the responses to the book in Ian Hacking, “Artificial Phenomena,” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 24 no. 2 (1991): 235–241; and Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. 13–48), and Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: the Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) and idem, *Galileo’s Instruments of Credit: Telescopes, Images, Secrecy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2006).

19 This is plausibly suggested by Leach, “The Three Jewels.”

neither could Galileo Galilei's decision to name the first four moons of Jupiter visible to his newly invented telescope after members of the Medici family of Florence warrant the reduction of the optics of his apparatus or the history of observational astronomy to the political vagaries of seventeenth century Florence.²⁰ For all that a history of Indic philology needs to avoid the caricature of the idealised, otherworldly domain of the premodern pandit—with his eyes set solely on the promise of *mokṣa*—so too it must be wary of a too-easy collapse of complex social institutions and self-aware intellectual practices into the undifferentiated workings of the field of power.

This is hardly a problem unique to the study of past science, though the debates there on non-reductive historicization, or what is more technically termed the 'internalism-externalism debate,' have been especially trenchant.²¹ For early South India, our uneven access to adequate evidence for social history has encouraged a habit of premature reduction to external motivation wherever possible: a scrap of historical information—a dedicatory verse to a ruling king, for example—warrants the reading of a complex work as solely epiphenomenal to the legitimation of a certain royal house. The new southern scriptural philology and its śāstric inheritors suggest that a more capacious view of a brutally 'external' context needs to be admitted. In the first instance, we need to account empirically for the diversity of institutional forums in which textual scholarship was practiced, in order that then—and *only* then—it may become possible to venture inferences about the wider collective or individual projects in which these practices were imbricated. It is only in so far as we can recognize the remove at which Maheśvarānanda operated from the public life of Cidambaram in contrast to Veṅkaṭanātha that we can begin to frame hypotheses about these two men, the cities in which they spent their working lives, and the religious orders that flourished in these cities.

The Refusal of Teleology

The anti-teleological understanding of conceptual and practical change is central to contemporary science studies: Kuhn's classic model of competing paradigms and the periodic crises of research agenda, which supplies the *basso continuo* for much of the field, relies on exactly this premise. The responses

20 See Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier*, 127–139.

21 See especially Galison "Ten problems" (whose label "non-reductive contextualization" I adapt here) and Steven Shapin, "Discipline and bounding: The history and sociology of science as seen through the externalism-internalism debate," *History of Science* 30 (1992): 333–369.

to, demurs from, and critiques of Kuhn are practically a field unto themselves, one in which I claim no special authority. And his model has bequeathed to the English language—for good and ill—the now-tired figure of the ‘paradigm shift’. Amidst all of this, the basic fact of Kuhn’s argument is often forgotten. Scientific knowledge is not, the argument goes, the result of the steady accumulation of truth and the sifting out of error, but the ongoing outcome of conflicts between two or more incommensurable ways of approaching a problem, the formulation of one of which cannot necessarily appeal to an external standard (aside from “the assent of the relevant community”) to disprove the other. It follows from this that the appearance of an unproblematic continuity within a given field over a long period of time is an artifact of the system-internal workings of a given paradigm, of ‘normal science’ to use Kuhn’s jargon. That is, any such continuities are what the problems addressed by previously overcome paradigms look like from within the horizon of a subsequent regime of education and research, rhetorically committed to its own capacity to exhaust the phenomena under discussion. Thus Newtonian dynamics can be taken, in Kuhn’s example, to be a special instance of relativistic dynamics only through a spurious ‘derivation’ of the former from the latter.²²

I think that the value of this for cross-cultural comparison is obvious. In the face of such a theory, we would commit a serious methodological error were we to simply recruit Veṅkaṭanātha—with his sense of textual history and his principled aversion to the editor’s scalpel—into a Whiggish history of evolving text-critical and philological technique.²³ In doing this, we might in good conscience class Śāradātanaya (a magpie and a forger) and Maheśvarānanda (an eccentric, possibly a lunatic) as suitable objects of philological study, but not surely as philologists themselves.

Even if we avoid this kind of overly simple teleology, is it legitimate to regard Veṅkaṭanātha’s work as more rigorous or more successful than Śāradātanaya’s or Maheśvarānanda’s? Can we understand the Vaiṣṇava’s work to provide a basis for comparison with the philology of other times and places more readily than the Śaiva’s hermeneutical eccentricities, or the religiously eclectic

22 On the forensic model of securing assent within a research community, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 94 ff.; on the relationship between the Newtonian and the relativistic models, see 101–103.

23 This is roughly the epistemological stance seen in such earlier (and, it need to be emphasized, very learned and useful) attempts at the history of philological techniques in Sanskrit, such as Colas, “Critique et Transmission;” Gode, “Textual Criticism,” and Bhat-tacharya, “Use of Manuscripts.”

tic dramaturge's compositional sleights of hand? More strongly, given the differences between all these men's work, can we even account for their different modes of philology within a single conceptual frame? Or is one philology, another mendacity, and the other just perversely inventive interpretation?

Taking these works in a single gaze enables us to reformulate such comparative questions, while avoiding their teleological pitfalls. All three situated themselves within similar textual fields, for all that the details of their particular ontologies and soteriologies differed. All three works evince, as I have argued, a response to the techniques available to their anonymous predecessors, and for all of them the instability of the landscape of anonymous Sanskrit literature provided the occasion for composition; all were composed in a complex tension with their authors' literary sensibilities and interests. Despite the differences of matter and authorial style, the textual projects embodied in the *Bhāvaprakāśana*, the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* and the *Mahārthamañjarī* were basically of a piece, differential responses to parallel historical stimuli.

But while these very different works are intelligible within a common historical and conceptual framework, we need to attend to another, less obvious, shared feature: none of them seems to have inaugurated a larger shift in the practices, textual or otherwise, of their disciplines. Kuhn's model is less helpful in coming to terms with this second kind of implicit teleology, as the logic of his argument forces him to rely on the notion of 'anticipations' of eventual crises, smuggling in a latent figurative structure into his otherwise admirably contingent view of conceptual change. From the perspective of such Kuhnian anticipation, these three men writing around the turn of the fourteenth century possessed an awareness of the epistemic gap provoked by the proliferation of works of revelation, but they could be said to have "made no contact with a recognized trouble spot" in the textual practices of their time, and thus occasioned no wider transformation.²⁴

Śāradātanaya's work, which is ironically the easiest of these texts to dismiss, came closest to meeting these conditions. The wider crisis of textual authority that expressed itself in Perācīriyar's conservatism is diagnosed, if inadvertently, by the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s textual habits, and Śāradātanaya's work was to remain an authority to readers for centuries. Were we to adopt this thread of Kuhn's model and apply it to our temple-state philologists, we would be led to ask what exactly it was that failed to catch fire in Maheśvarānanda and Veṅkaṭanātha's own context, and in what circumstances did the ensuing crisis

24 Kuhn, *The Structure*, 76.

of textual knowledge, if any, take place? The luxuriant scriptural proliferation of this period led to what seems from this distance to be an eventual exhaustion of the exclusivist soteriologies of the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas: the temple culture which the *tantras* helped to sustain broadened out beyond the ambit of these texts, as can be seen in the eventual success of more vernacular modes of worship and sociality, and a wider concern with social recognition and the apportionment of honors than was the case in our philologists' era.²⁵ The liturgies of the temples all the way down to modern times continued to be drawn from the tantric corpora, but these ceased to be a major focus of élite intellectual concern. Increasingly, this concern shifted to the trans-sectarian idiom of Vedānta, to which Veṅkaṭanātha (that is, Vedāntadeśika) of course made profound contributions.

Yet the kind of scholarship practiced here does not seem to have simply represented an intellectual dead end: far from it. It is possible—to continue with this tentative admission of the intimation of later crises—to see these philologist-śāstrīs as precursors of that self-consciously 'new' scholarship of early modern times which has been the subject of much recent and productive scholarly attention.²⁶ To be certain, the proponents of *navya* learning did not engage in a large-scale way with purāṇic or tantric textual criticism, though their own problems brought them into contact (and conflict) with the authoritative statements of the author-compilers of the *purāṇas* especially.²⁷ More

25 On the early-modern concern with temple honors, see Appadurai and Breckenridge's classic study (Arjun Appadurai and Carol Appadurai Breckenridge, "The South Indian Temple: Authority, Honour, and Redistribution," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 10, no. 2 (1976): 187–211). Based on ethnographic fieldwork, their model does not make any claims about periodization; I propose that much of its focus upon the redistribution of honors (Ta. *mariyātai*) and shares (Ta. *paṅku*) pertains to early-modern times. I base this on my impressionistic sense of medieval temple epigraphy, where I have not encountered these terms as major areas of concern. For corroborating evidence of this, see the *Tamiḻk kalvēṭṭu cōllakarāti*, pp. 381 (some slight references to *paṅku*), and 481 (notably no reference at all for *mariyātai*; the cognate *mariyāti* is glossed as *vaḷakkam* or 'custom,' based on a single reference).

26 Much of this has been conducted under the auspices of the Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism project (<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pollock/sks/>), for a survey of which see Sheldon Pollock, ed., *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

27 For instance, see Christopher Minkowski, "Astronomers and Their Reasons: Working Paper on Jyotiḥśāstra," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30 no. 2 (2002): 495–514 on the encounters between astral science (*jyotiḥśāstra*) and purāṇic cosmographies.

broadly, the *ad fontes* attitude which characterized much of this work across a variety of fields could be portrayed as a further reaction to the proliferation of authoritative textual knowledge with which our authors, in their different ways, were involved.

Of potentially great significance here is the work of Appayya Dīkṣita (ca. 1520–1593). The connections between Dīkṣita and these authors are many: he was the commentator on Veṅkaṭanātha's largest Sanskrit poetic work; he was an advocate of the late-medieval Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭha who occasioned claims of spurious textual fabrication; a scholar whose *Kuvalayānanda*, on literary tropology, relied on techniques of textual borrowing and recasting familiar to the old anonymous philology; and a Śaiva theorist who was potentially familiar with the *Mahārthamañjarī*.²⁸ For a better picture of these connections, we will have to await the much-needed intellectual biography of Appayya;²⁹ nevertheless, it is possible to intelligibly frame Veṅkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda's efforts in such a forward-looking, prefigurative manner.

Such a synthesizing project could prove productive, supplying a useful bridgehead between the increasingly independent historiographies of medieval and early modern India. Still, it would be a mistake to too-hastily assimilate Maheśvarānanda's intellectual world with Appayya's, as many as eight generations later. Until we have more adequately mapped the conceptual, institutional, and bibliographic terrain of the understudied later medieval world, its internal coherence and long-term trajectories will remain in the realm of cautious hypothesis. The work of the anonymous Southern philologists and their śāstric inheritors may prove to be a phenomenon exemplary in precisely its isolation from later scholarly practices and habits of thought. From this perspective, Maheśvarānanda and Veṅkaṭanātha might best be seen as the most pre-

28 For this suggestion I am grateful to Jonathon Duquette, who in a personal communication has conveyed to me some evidence of verbal parallels between Maheśvarānanda and Appayya's *Śivārkamañidīpikā*. I await the publication of Dr. Duquette's research, which will hopefully cast important light on the relationship between the sixteenth century 'bull of the Draviḍas' and his Śaiva predecessors.

29 N. Ramesan, *Sri Appayya Dikshita* (Hyderabad: Srimad Appayya Dikshitendra Granthavali Prakasana Samithi, 1972) while thorough, can no longer be considered up-to-date. For now, refer to Yigal Bronner, "What Is New and What Is Navya: Sanskrit Poetics on the Eve of Colonialism," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30.5 (2002): 441–462; idem, "Back to the Future: Appayya Dīkṣita's Kuvalayānanda and the Rewriting of Sanskrit Poetics," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 48 (2004): 47–79; and Lawrence McCrea, "Coloring Tradition: Appayyadīkṣita's Invention of Śrīkaṇṭha's Vedānta," unpublished paper, n.d. On Śrīkaṇṭha's Śivādvaita, S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri, *The Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭha* (Madras: University of Madras, 1972) can still be consulted with profit.

cociously gifted and radical participants in a long cultural moment that would not produce any successors, something worthy of study in its own right.³⁰

The Agency of the Non-Human

The bibliographic scheme in which the *Sūtasamhitā* placed itself seems to have exerted a profound influence on the creation of later texts assigning themselves to the *Skandapurāṇa* and on the Keralan *Jaiminīyasaṃhitā*. Cekkilār produced some of the poetic frisson of his account of Cuntaramūrti's calling through his invocation of the everyday details of the documentary practices of his day. The inventions of Śāradātanaya's dramaturgical compendium depended on the crowd of texts competing for the attention of contemporary readers; Aṭiyārkkunallār's great commentary bemoaned the loss or fragmentation of an earlier Tamil scholarly dispensation. Veṅkaṭanātha repurposed the Vaiṣṇava tantric authors' fear of textual *métissage* to create new canons of philological study, and his scrupulous recording of citations perhaps derived from an accessible collection of written texts, an archive. And it was perhaps the taken-for-granted details of the local realia of manuscript text-objects—the intersection of hand, eye, stylus, leaf, and lampblack—that permitted Maheśvarānanda's jarring collision of quotation and comment, source-text and interpretative gloss in his radical revision of the *Bhagavadgītā*. In all of these cases, we see the working-out of unintended consequences, as well as the ways in which technical and practical details can exert powerful and unanticipated effects, even when those details are seemingly trivial. And in all of these cases, human agents can be seen to be imbricated not only in the physical matrices of their textual cultures, but also in the spontaneously arising theories of textuality embedded in particulars form of literate life-ways.

Philology is sometimes accused, usually by those ignorant of its practice, of being idealist, as trafficking in imagined textual essences. That this is far from being the case can be seen from these instances, as it can from a myriad of others. What is of interest to me is less the disproving of philology (and philologists) as unworldly, than accounting for just how much the world—in all its seemingly solid pregiven thingyness—is an active contributor to the creation of this kind of knowledge. The world consists of more than just brute objects, of course: the *saṃkara* that so bothered the Pāñcarātriṅka authors was a conceptual and lexical invention, though one that possessed powerful nuances

30 For some parallel reflections on the premature collapse of the medieval into the early modern, concentrating on very different source material, see Whitney Cox, "Scribe and Script in the Cālukya West Deccan," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 47 no. 1 (2010): 24 ff.

(of impurity, of miscegenation) that would have been viscerally repugnant to an orthodox Brahman like Veṅkaṭanātha. The use of this category thus invoked a range of associations, a string of perilous parallel cases, a ramifying proliferation of ethical judgments, suggestions that Veṅkaṭanātha's adoption of it retained intact.

What might a history look like in which we treat factors such as these not as just structuring constraints but as active participants in the creation of knowledge? Can we apportion agency in such a way that we can see the informing conditions of the textual format adopted by Maheśvarānanda or his amanuensis as central to the production of his reading of the *Bhagavadgītā*? Is it intelligible to think that the material, social, and ideological inflections of this particular local manuscript culture might be as significant to our interpretation as are those much-discussed effects of the print revolution elsewhere in time and space?³¹

Perhaps this is asking too much of poorly-understood phenomena, and is too taxing of our impoverished explanatory resources. All the same, the practical examples that fill the pages of the history of science suggest that the explanatory burden in accounts of discovery or theorization can often be shifted to insentient agents, first and foremost to those delimited and controlled sectors of nature ("experiments") whose coming-into-knowledge provides the narrative matter of such histories. To take a celebrated example: Robert Boyle's

31 There is a small library devoted to tracking the epochal transformations of the introduction of moveable-type print, of which Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991) are only major touchstones. Departing from these, especially from Anderson, Sheldon Pollock, "Literary Culture and Manuscript Culture in Precolonial India," in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book*, ed. Simon Eliot et al (London: The British Library, 2007), 77–94 offers a comprehensive overview of South Asian manuscript culture, polemically suggesting the importance attributed to print to be exaggerated in the South Asian case. Sascha Ebeling, "Tamil or 'Incomprehensible Scribble'? The Tamil Philological Commentary (*urai*) in the Nineteenth Century," in *Between Preservation and Recreation: Tamil Traditions of Commentary*, ed. Eva Wilden (Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie / École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009), 281–312; and idem, "The College of Fort St George and the Transformation of Tamil Philology during the Nineteenth Century," in *The Madras School of Orientalism: Producing Knowledge in Colonial South India*, ed. Thomas R. Trautmann (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 233–260 are two detailed case studies of the intellectual and institutional consequences of the transition to print in colonial Tamilnadu, along with cogent sketches of the precolonial, manuscript-based practices of Tamil philology.

air-pump, its manufacture by Robert Hooke and its retooling in Boyle's laboratory, its tendency to leak, and the imperfect vacuum produced within it all supplied Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer with one of the leading agents in their description of the emergence of experimental science in Restoration England, and of the intransigent opposition to it by Thomas Hobbes and others. Shapin and Schaffer understood the *machina Boyleana* as only one of several technologies at play in this narrative—alongside a “literary technology” of the emergent form of scientific rapportage and a “social technology” of the professional comportment of researchers—but it was the apparatus and its capacity to produce matters of fact which lay at the center of the several overlapping discursive, material, and institutional fields for which they account.³² This suggests, at the very least, that we should be prepared to work ‘backwards’ from seemingly coherent, self-identical works of textualized language to the multiple forces that subtended their creation, just as Boyle's writings (or the *Harvard Case History in Experimental Science* through which modern students of Boyle encounter his work) can be said to establish only a portion of the relevant evidence.

If we can allow enough ontological latitude to admit non-human, non-rational agents into our history, another part of the story of the success of the philology of the *tantras* and *purāṇas* comes into view: the impress of the anonymous style itself. The dialogical style of verse-composition in simple Sanskrit was something pre-given—the southerners who wrote in this way had an enormous library of examples on which to base themselves, and by and large they eschewed any changes to their inherited model. Composing a conversation between, say, the great god Śiva and the sage Nārada, an author had recourse to a recognizable set of formulae, to the loose-fitting constraints of the verse rhythms of the *anuṣṭubh* meter, and to a permissiveness of awkward or even barbarous language, as only the gods can be allowed grammatical license within the norm-obsessed world of Sanskrit literates.³³ The style was a leisurely one, with its slow eliciting of information through question and answer, the potential to speak of a point in brief or to dilate over many hundreds of couplets,

32 Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-pump*, esp. 22–79.

33 On so-called *aśa* language (the language “of God;” the name used by the Śaiva scholar Kṣemarāja to describe the register of the *Svacchandatantra*), see Goodall, *Bhaṭṭarā-maṇṭhāvīracitā kīraṇavṛttīḥ*, pp. lxx–lxx; for a wider statement of this theme of the divine derangement of Sanskrit, see Charles Malamoud's elegant essay “The Gods Have No Shadows: Reflections on the Secret Language of the Gods in Ancient India,” in *Cooking the World: Ritual and thought in Ancient India*, trans. David G. White (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 195–206.

to dive headlong into theological intricacy or to mark time while stringing along narrative and poetic commonplaces. This can try the patience of even the most sympathetic modern reader, but it exerted a powerful effect on the texts' initial and intended readers—for all that it lacks in elegance, purāṇic and tantric language possesses (as was evidently *meant* to possess) a certain aura, a mantle of authority.

This authority granted to the purāṇic and tantric style gave its users a great deal of compositional freedom, permitting the author-compilers of the *Sūta-saṃhitā*, for instance, to rove at will over the whole of Brahmanical literature. Nor was its use a purely strategic effort at self-legitimation: rather the style, ready to hand and always-already there, had a tendency to overwhelm its individual composers, to speak through them. This is one reason why these works tend to bulk so large: texts like the *Sūtasamhitā*'s long and diffuse *Yajñavaibhavakhaṇḍa* at times resemble exercises in versified automatic writing. Where do we place the locus of authorial agency in cases like this: in the anonymous compilers, their sources, the norms of the inherited literary form, or in some hybrid intersection of all of these?

If we are thus willing to admit that a history of old Indic philology might best be prepared to supplement an account of exclusively human-centered agency with a more capacious framework, then yet another set of entities present themselves for inclusion: the gods. Simple hermeneutical charity suggests this; as we have seen, it was a live possibility in this world to condemn as spurious work claiming for itself the status of divine revelation—Veṅkaṭanātha did so to his opponents and his fellow Vaiṣṇavas alike. But these condemnations took shape against a background of works composed, copied, preserved, and expounded by men, which those men claimed to be the *ipsissima verba* of a host of divine figures. From our perspective, it is easy to see this all as an act of enormous bad faith, if not a centuries-long conspiracy. That this is inadequate is obvious. All the same, I for one would prefer to keep my humanism, materialism, and historicism intact. What to do?

Though cast in a form that resists easy summation, and in a manner that is typically idiosyncratic, Bruno Latour's exercises towards a 'symmetrical anthropology' of religion are of some use here.³⁴ Departing from his earlier work in the sociology of science and the tacit theory of modernity, Latour's argument amounts to a social-scientific nondualism. The sundering of subject from object that is definitive of 'modern,' 'critical' thought (the extension of these terms is somewhat vague) has produced in Latour's account a series of mutually

34 Latour, *On the modern cult of the factish gods* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1–66.

interpenetrating conundrums, among them the invention of ‘belief’ as a mental state possessed by other people (‘the Blacks,’ in Latour’s arch but unhappy term), the concomitant positing of a cognitive and moral freedom possessed by the moderns (‘the Whites,’ ditto); the condemnation of fabricated things to which are ascribed independent powers as ‘fetishes,’ and the parallel fetishization of the supposedly independent, value-neutral ‘facts’ of scientific knowledge, thought of as pregiven by nature and unfabricated, etymology and science studies be damned. To work towards collapsing these dichotomies, Latour produces a portmanteau—‘factish’—meant to suggest the binding up of subjective awareness and objective actuality, of construction and efficacy within a given chunk of the universe, for which he offers as examples Pasteur’s lactic acid bath and a *shaligram* (properly *śālagrāma*, a Vaiṣṇava emblem usually containing an ammonite fossil³⁵). As entities entangled in networks of actors and practices, the set of Latour’s factishes include divinities, whether the gods of a Candomblé initiate or the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes. He is emphatic that this is not just a case of ‘representation’—any more than are the matters of fact produced in laboratory science—but opportunities to see the collection of overlapping agencies found in the world from a different, and more adequate, perspective.

All of this admittedly is rather woolly, but Latour’s willingness to accept what he calls “the variable-geometry ontologies” of nonhuman entities has its attractions. Latour’s entangled actors resemble nothing so much as Maheśvarānanda’s view of the person as the contingent intersection of circuits of feminized divinities and phenomenological potentialities, though the comparison might seem detrimental to one or both men.³⁶ At the very least, the symmetries Latour proposes supply us with an ethnohistorical injunction to perform the difficult work of trying to inhabit the multiply-entangled world of our medieval philologists, whatever their metaphysical commitments. All of these philologists—and here they are exemplary of the wider world of Sanskrit and vernacular literates—understood the world to be shot through with the tropes and *topoi* of the universe of discourse in which they spent much of their imaginative and intellectual lives. It was through works of language that

35 Latour draws this example from U.R. Anantha Murthy’s novel *Bharathipura* (*On the modern cult*, 25 ff.); he does not seem to be aware of the paleontological significance of this common piece of ritual accoutrement, though I imagine it might be of interest.

36 Latour, *On the modern cult* p. 43; on Maheśvarānanda’s theory of the person, see Cox “A South Indian Śākta Anthropogony,” and compare the similar (and wonderfully evocative) description of the imaginative practice in the *Saundaryalaharī* in Shulman, *More than Real*, 120–134.

they experienced the world at its most real; it was the eye that fell on the text that for them most clearly saw the nature of things. But the continuum of subject, object, human, and divine that Latour sees as incompletely sundered in modernity was not available to our medieval south India philological virtuosi in some prelapsarian, sub-Heideggerian purity. Instead, its tensions and disjunctions were plotted for them within the boundaries of this textually saturated mode of consciousness. They, and their works, were as entangled within these as Latour's experimental apparatus or contemporary religious vision.

Problems and Prospects

I began by presenting the conceptual and lexical problem that attends the study of premodern philological practice in South Asia: for all that methodical and virtuoso readers undeniably existed, there exists no identifiable emic label which would permit us to infer a critical and practical self-consciousness on their part. This nominalist concession was framed by a suggestion, that intensified modes of reading were perhaps so bound up in the fabric of intellectual life that they literally went without saying. And there is certainly abundant evidence that the making and the understanding of texts was a widely disseminated elite activity, one that grew more pervasive and more intense with the beginning of the second millennium of the common era. Although it has gone all but unaddressed here, this increase can be correlated with the vernacular transformation of these same centuries: the self-aware philological armature of Cekkīlār's *Pēriyapurāṇam* and Aṭiyārkkunallār's effort to exhaustively document the lost world of the *Cilappatikāram* are both suggestive of the wider amplitude of vernacular textual creation and interpretation.³⁷

A comprehensive historical survey of these practices remains a task for the future, a scholarly desideratum that must necessarily be the work of many hands. I will conclude by offering a few recapitulations as to the shape such a history might take, using Veṅkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda's works as a point of departure. As both men's relationship to their textual antecedents and to their own philological methods suggests, the horizon of intelligibility of textual scholarship depends in the first instance on the scholar's own account, whether tacit or explicit, of his methods. While this should really be a truism of historical reconstruction—seeing things from the other chap's point of view—I find there to be surprisingly little sympathy for this, at least within Indology.

37 This is, of course, a major theme of Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*.

Positive knowledge can be gathered from works of premodern philology whose presumptions differ as radically from our own as Maheśvarānanda's, yet positivism alone cannot help us to answer, or to even frame, the questions that a work like his can raise. The relationship between such hermeneutically charitable reconstruction and modern critical scholarship is not one of dichotomy, as it is often thought by both sides to the argument. Instead, it is an ideally virtuous circle. Speaking purely anecdotally, it was my own effort to understand the tacit logic of the *Mahārthamañjarī* that occasioned my attempt to partly edit the work; the process of edition not only sharpened my sense of its linguistic fabric, but raised altogether new questions about Maheśvara's deeply self-conscious understanding of the act of text-making.

The history of philology can easily fall into one of two broad types, each legitimate and intellectually significant in and of themselves: on the one hand, a history of practices, seeking to produce a narrative of the evolving body of methods and doctrines by which a given textual field was interpreted and explained; on the other, a history of philology's imbrication in wider social and intellectual frameworks. Both of these styles of inquiry, however, turn upon a shared problematic which—in a final recourse to Latourian nondualism—we may call the reconstruction of the social universe of past modes of scholarship.

Both Venkaṭanātha and Maheśvarānanda are exemplary in how, in very different ways, their works serve to collapse this dichotomy: the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*'s attempt to purge both the social and textual domains of *saṃkara* starkly illustrates how closely the technical and socio-political domains of philology were bound together for Venkaṭanātha. Contrariwise, Maheśvarānanda's deliberate fusion of *yogin* and *sahṛdaya* in imagining the sociality of the *Mahārthamañjarī*—an emergent social microverse in which the author deliberately set himself as his readers' equal—takes on an almost poignant quality. On the one hand, the Śaiva author's marginal place in the institutional world of his time demonstrates that political-courtly preferment and innovative scholarly production need not necessarily be linked. Communities of scholarly authors and readers could be quite literally imagined into existence, free from social and political constraints, and even from the material constraints that print culture would eventually bring to bear on South Asian learning. Maheśvarānanda had no patron, royal or otherwise, because he did not need one; among the literate élites of his time and place creating a text required only the will to do so and the leisure to see it through to completion. The *Mahārthamañjarī*'s many manuscript witnesses descend to us through the labors of one copyist at a time, men who found the text deserving of their own will and leisure to read and to reproduce. But the figure of the hermeneutical *yogin* takes on a different quality when we consider how poorly the work as an

integral, authorially sanctioned product fared outside of its own local textual-cultural ecology: in distant Kashmir—the land of the most ideal of Maheśvarānanda's ideal readers—some scribe or scribes saw fit to cut the *Mañjarī* down in a way that undid its author's unique vision of a readerly, philologically driven salvation.

What all of this suggests to me is that an attempt to historically reconstruct past habits of philology necessitates both hermeneutic charity and the most rigorous pursuit of the discipline of context. The work of a truly symmetrical, genuinely *historical* history of global philology is still in its infancy, if not its gestation. Such a history will only succeed insofar as it proves itself willing to traverse textual and intellectual terrain that is very different from the cluster of local textual ecologies that saw the emergence of the critical philological methods of the early modern and modern West. But this inquiry can only yield results if the imaginal, linguistically grounded worlds of its historical subjects can be understood in terms of their value within the wider social universes of their emergence. This task, and its potential intellectual payoff, are not limited to the idiographic needs of particular specialist fields, as much as specialist knowledge and methods are an absolute necessity. Any such inquiry must have in its background the question of the place of our own philological ways of life, within our own conjunctural situation, both within the institution of the university and more broadly still, as local and global citizens. Surprising though it may be, it is only working through these possibilities of what textual study has meant in the past—in terms of its achievements, its limitations, its points of brilliant focus as well as of myopic blindness—that its possible futures might yet be imagined.

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